The Metropolitan Community Church
AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD — MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA
Pastor

(205) 476-9142

Volume 1, No. 2 — October 1985

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART...

The veil of distaste and misconceptions surrounding the gay segment of the population is nowhere better illustrated than in the film, "God, Gays and the Gospel," a no-nonsense look at the rapid rise of the Metropolitan Community Church.

One of the most poignant plights of gay people in today's world is the denial of their right to worship by most of the traditional organized religions. Almost without exception the Christian faith has taken upon itself the right to refuse gays a part in the Family of God.

The long struggle by MCC founder Rev. Troy Perry to establish a faith, not just for gays but for anyone, is the focus of the film. In concise, to the point terms, the production addresses the sheer magnitude of the work being done and the forward strides being made by Perry and his legion of pastors and congregations.

Since its founding in 1969, MCC has endured everything from ridicule to bombings to burned-out church sanctuaries. More than 17 years later, Perry and his followers have forged a recognized, respected faith wherein all are welcomed. It is a tribute to the ecumenical and accepting nature of this church that 20 per cent of its members are non-gay. It is a true illustration of the overused, misused term, "real Christian people."

Perry, a transplanted Floridian, excluded from the church of his childhood, spent years berating himself as "unacceptable." In the end, he determined that there is no reason -- save for human bigotry and Biblical misinterpretation -- for gays to be denied a right to their faith. Nowhere in the Bible, he points out, is there condemnation of homosexuality as it is understood today. In one of his most moving sermons, he presents a stunning point: "If AIDS is God's "gift" to the homosexual, then is toxic shock syndrome God's "gift" to women for being female? ...or is Legionnaires' Disease God's "gift" to the American Legion for being too patriotic?

From the perspective of a "straight," the message of "God, Gays, and the Gospel" is very much to the point: No human deserves the right to tell another he or she will never be acceptable in the eyes of God. Moreover, it should be remembered that Perry et al are not working for immediate and total social acceptance, but for establishment of a climate of cooperation and understanding.

No "straight" who professes a concern for human rights should let gays bear this struggle alone.

(Note: N.J.Green is MCC at Mobile's "token straight," our assistant organist. Thank God for our "straight" friends.)

REMINDER

MCC MEMBERS-ATTENTION!
Congregational Meeting, October 27, following worship service. Election of officers, other important business, including coming into agreement with GSS changes.

FROM THE EDITOR--

Our first issue was a roaring success, so the community tells us. We personally wish to thank the bar owners and managers for making the newsletter a reality, rather than the "dream" so many of us have talked about for the last couple of years. At last we have a way to communicate ideas among gays in Mobile. We also want to apologize to Chuck at Troopers for omitting a news item last month. Thanks for bearing with us and our mistakes -- we'll get it right with practice. A word of thanks to all of you out there from the small group at MCC. Because of you the newsletter will continue to grow, to increase our awareness and to solidify the community.

To date we have received the names "Revelations," "Mobile Pride News," and "Genesis." Don't be bashful. Send or call in your suggestion.

We stated our purpose last month, "to offer a news source for the entire community." We are happy to report that this issue, our second, has accomplished that goal. Sincere applause to each organization and business for your participation. We are open to your suggestions and your criticism. Our new feature. "Community Profile" has already been designated for the November issue. Send in the name of someone you wish to acknowledge in a future issue.

Our editorial policy requires that a name and address be submitted along with newscopy. Your name and address will not be printed without your written consent, but we must have this information to protect the legal position of the church. Please drop editorial copy or editorial replies at the church or mail them to: MCC Newsletter, P.O. Box 8524, Mobile, Ala. 36608. The deadline for all copy is the Third Monday of the Month.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

NEWS FROM THE LESBIAN TASK FORCE OF NOW

Two important pieces of legislation are going to be brought to Congress in this year, NOW has informed us. One, is H.R. 230, the Federal Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights Legislation which is spearheaded by Representative Ted Weiss of Brooklyn, N.Y. and carries the endorsement of 44 other representatives, including Rep. Gerry Studds of Massachusetts, an openly gay legislator. The bill primarily calls for the insertion of the words, "affexional or sexual orientation," throughout the Civil Rights Act of 1964, following the word "color," and in other legislation, like the Equal opportunity Act, where it is inserted after "sex." thus identifying gay and Lesbian discrimination as equal to that against people of color and as pervasive as sexism. Interestingly, the same act speaks against acts of intimidation or violence against gays and Lesbians in the same passage that it speaks about violence against religious groups.

The other piece of legislation is the now infamous McCarran-Walter act, which prohibits certain people from entering the United States because of political or sexual orientation. Farley Mowat, the Canadian author of such dangerous books as the environmental study, "Never Cry Wolf," and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Colombia's Nobel Prize Winning novelist, were both excluded -- and refused to be singled out as special cases -- under this Act. Gay men and women can be refused entry into the U.S. -- and have been -- by the terms of the McCarran Act. It is important for the McCarran Act to not include gays and Lesbians under the heading of those accused of "moral turpitude."

The legislation above is entitled Immigration Exclusion and Deportation Amendments of 1985. The first is HR 230. Your congressional representative will vote on both of these. Make your wishes known. One letter -- one letter -- can make the difference, because very few letters on any subject are received from constituents, and as many as five or six letters can seem like an avalanche. If you are interested in how to write to Congress, call the HELPLINE for a copy of MCC's booklet, Writing to Congress, from MCC's Department of Christian Social Action.

Bulletin Board

ORDER OF OSIRIS - "The Rocky Horror Show" Friday and Saturday, November 1 and 2, Presented by the Order of Osiris and the Esquire House -- at the Esquire House. $5.00 admission. See an Osiris member or your bartender for tickets.

Less than 140 days to Osiris' 5th Anniversary Mardi Gras Ball, February 7, 1986.

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - Study series for 4 weeks on Men's Life and Men's Issues. Call the UU's at 342-6834 for information and starting date (near the end of the month.)

2-day Workshop -- The Haunting Church October 18 and 19 at the UU Fellowship 6345 Old Shell Road.

Volleyball -- every 2nd and 4th Sunday, at 2 P.M. at the UU's, weather permitting.

better gay than grumpy

TROOPERS - Shuffleboard tournaments every Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. Pool tournaments every Thursday at 8:30. Some of the best popcorn in Mobile.

CORRAL - Pool tournament every Monday at 9:00 p.m. Please watch for announcements of upcoming Halloween events.

CPA - Costume contest at midnight in conjunction with Hooker's Ball.

Free buffet every Sunday at 9:30 p.m.

Watch for "Name that Tune" to begin early NOvember on Sunday evenings.

DAVID'S II - Special Guest, Halloween Eve through Saturday, Carmen Del Rio.

First Sunday of October begins David's free buffet from 3-9 p.m., and the Tea Dance.

Shrimp boil, Sunday October 13th, from 3 til? To help raise funds for MCC's HELPLINE and newsletter. $3.00 cover, includes all the boiled shrimp you can eat, along with other goodies.

ESQUIRE - Rocky Horror Show November 1 and 2 at 9:30 p.m. Get your tickets from Esquire or any Osiris member. $5.00 per ticket.

PROFILE

Did you enjoy Mobile's Gay Pride 85? Our first profile is, Harry, organizer and leader of Pride 85. Harry was the catalyst that brought together the various elements of the community. It wasn't his first time out, certainly not his first effort for our benefit. Fifteen years in the Mobile area has seen Harry speaking at the University of South Alabama and Springhill College on Gay/Lesbian issues. He was one of the strong leaders of the old Gulf Alliance for Equality as well.

When Harry isn't working on our behalf, he enjoys meeting the public in his retail profession. While there's still daylight after a hard day at work, you might see him out bicycling or running, or on Sundays offering his talents at the Unitarian-Universalists' worship and fellowship. "My religion," Harry said, has given me a lot more direction in my life, and a greater sense of freedom to allow my own beliefs to evolve."

Harry offered the following thoughts about and reflections on Gay Pride'85: '85 was very successfull considering the late starting date for planning. '84, our first Gay Pride Activity, made '85 much easier to put together. Adding more organizations -- the UU's and MCC -- added much to '85's success. Without Danni B. '85 would not have come toether. A SPECIAL THANKS TO HER.

For 1986 Gay Pride, Harry foresees greatness. "For once, we are starting off with some money, $186.00, thanks to the bars. We will begin planning at a much earlier date, offering the same type of activities, with more variety, however. We will certainly push for more publicity and participation from all the organizations. We want Gay Pride to be financially self-supporting, and there's no reason it shouldn't be if we all work at it."

When asked what he would change if given the right opportunity, Harry offered the following: "I'd like to see more open Gay/Lesbian businesses, organizations, and individuals come out, and a greater media presence for the community. However, the fear of coming out is still our greatest obstacle. Most of us, including me, still face job discrimination, neighborhood harassment, and the possible loss of our families or their strong disapproval."

In a larger context, Harry went on, "Much of our recent publicity has been derogatory. I feel that the Moral Majority uses us as their biggest fundraiser, particularly now that AIDS has come to the forefront of the news media."

Harry is one of the strongest and most open figures in our Mobile Gay Community, and with his support and leadership, gay Mobile should reach the goals which he is helping us set.

SOCIETY LOUNGE - Beginning in October, the first weekend each month, Miss Betty will be presenting weekend shows at 10 and 12 midnight. No cover.

SOMETHING TO SELL, SERVICE TO OFFER?? Call 476-9142 for rates and deadlines. Please NO PERSONALS, except Birthday, Anniversary, Thank You's.

TROOPERS
215 Conti Street
438-9139
HOURS: 11 a.m.-3 a.m.

CORRAL
54 So. Conception
433-9258
Weekdays - Noon Till
Weekends - 24 hours

...from the pastor

SAUL AND ANOMIE

In the late 1800's, the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, coined the word ANOMIE (without a name) to explain the psychological state of strangers, people at the edge of social movements with enormous change, and people who belonged to subcultures where they were unsure of what the social expectations were within a dominant group. They felt, as James Baldwin must have, like "nobody knows my name." As a matter of fact, in a true state of anomie, it's more like "I don't even know my own name." Durkheim postulated that when a society is experiencing great anomie, the suicide rate goes up. When I read of Saul, the first king of Israel in the Bible, I realized that even in Biblical times, people knew the concept of anomie, even though they didn't know the word.

Saul lived in an anomic time. He was a soldier who had been trained in the old skills of warfare before iron was invented. Suddenly, there was iron. And iron was so strong that all the weapons he had been taught to use were nearly useless. So he learned to use iron, but he was never comfortable with it. Then the people of his area learned about a new God, and all the things he was used to in the old gods were outdated. To add to his problems, Jahweh decided Saul should be king of Israel. Saul wasn't from a royal family (there weren't any royal families in Israel -- he was the first) and he didn't know how a king behaved, he'd never even had a king. But Jahweh had selected him to be king. And still worse, his son gets friendly with this David fellow -- and he knows there's something strange there -- but can that fellow play the harp! He wasn't even permitted to ask the seer what was going to happen, and feel secure, he had to trust this Jahweh God. Saul learned to adapt -- but he was never happy with the new ways, and when things really got tough, he looked to his old gods and went over to see the Witch of Endor to find out what the enemy had in store. That was where he and Jahweh God parted. Poor Saul. He was caught in a world he hardly understood! Everything was changing, nothing seemed to have a center. How he wished for the good old days, when the gods were secure, the military knew what they were doing, the country had the right kind of folk leading it, and people knew how to behave-- knew the rules. Saul was so confused, he hardly knew his own name any more. He was a real case of anomie. And eventually, he did what Durkheim postulated -- he committed suicide.

Can you see some parallels? Many people today feel that sense of anomie. The world has changed so rapidly that people are frightened. They want some sense of the past to hold on to. God, they pray, make it safe again, let me know what to expect! Many Christians are at that point. The world has changed so greatly that they are frightened. Nuclear energy, great social upheaval -- especially within the time of the baby boomers; new forms of government--like Communism and socialism -- scare them. The questioning of old beliefs and the arising of new ideas --all of these together are frightening for people who remember how simple it was when everybody knew what to expect. When the milk train stopped and the old time religion had meaning for everyone -- when everyone was American and your neighbor wasn't a Cambodian Buddhist, a Russian Jew, a Japanese Taoist and your son or daughter hadn't picked up some new religion like the Moonies. When sexuality and sex roles were simple -- men were men and women were girls, and nobody they knew was gay. People out there are scared. And they want the old time religion that had meaning and they want to go back to the time when everybody knew the rules. Well, it's that kind of time, and Jerry Falwell plays upon the fears of those people, and promises them "The Old Time Gospel Hour" and tells them who the enemy is (us), and they follow him, and he profits, and profits, and profits.

But maybe there's more to it than that. Durkheim was also talking about anomie being a condition for strangers and sojourners and for people in subcultures. Maybe there's something there for us, as well. Gay liberation has called us to come out -- it has asked us to change our ways and to trust God to help us find a way to be a new kind of gay people-- strong, and open, and fearless. And

SOOM AND DIGNITY TO BEGIN IN MOBILE

Efforts are being made to organize two new organizations for gay and Lesbian people in Mobile. According to John P., who is spearheading the drive, the Silver Owls of Mobile (SOOM) and a Dignity chapter are looking for persons interested in these groups.

SOOM is a social group for older people, usually over the age of 40, and for younger people who like to be with older gays and Lesbians.

Dignity is an organization for gay Catholics and their friends. The chapter will be part of the national organization that consists of over 117 chapters across the nation.

"Too often gay and Lesbian Catholics feel alienated from their church. Dignity has been successful in being a bridge for these people to rebuild a religious life. Also, Dignity has been effective in creating a dialogue with the church's hierarchy," said John P.

He noted that the SOOM organization is simply an attempt to bring people together in a social context. "Many older gays and Lesbians simply have no social place to go except the bars, where they are usually ignored by younger people. SOOM will be an attempt to provide a congenial group for dinner parties, theater and other outings.

Anyone interested in SOOM or Dignity is asked to contact John at 342-7891, or the HELPLINE at 476-9142.

FIRST NIGHTERS

People interested in going to theater: Involves joining Joe Jefferson Players ($25.00 for 6 plays/musicals) plus other theater presentations. Call HELPLINE for further information - 476-9142.

Club Park Ave
#7 S. Joachim St.
Mobile, AL 36602
JIM CRISS
General Manager
(205) 433-1236
(205) 433-9185

...from the pastor

maybe we, too, are like the Falwell followers. It was so secure in my closet. I was so comfortable hiding. I really don't need these new, frightening ideas of openness and liberation, do I? Oh, yes, you do. You need them for your mental health, you need them for your ability to be a whole person, you need them in a world of change, so that you can change with the world and not be stuck, as Saul was, in fear. Saul clung to the old gods, and could not trust Jahweh God -- and he lost. Most of us try the same thing. We stick to our old gods, our closetedness and our lies. God sees through us -- God knows who we are, and God loves us enough to invite us to be KING. Be all you can be, be the royal person God invites you to be. The alternative for far too many of us has been Saul's solution, suicide; the death of who we really are or can be. The gay community is growing up, and learning that in taking risks there is strength and growth. Don't be a Saul -- be a David. Take the risks -- and grow!

COMING OUT

I've often heard Rev. Marge quote her friend from Providence, Ray LaRiviere, who coined a phrase about gay attitudes, "As long as I can boogie, I'm free." A lot of us started out the same way. If it hadn't been for Gay/Lesbian bars, we would have had nothing. Work, a relationship, maybe -- and then party time at the bars. But heavens, don't ask me to meet your there before the sun went down.

We remain in our closets, doing nothing, hoping and sometimes even praying that no one ever discovers who we "really are." From birth, almost, we are conditioned that to be Gay/Lesbian is a fate worse than death. So we hide and we die a thousand deaths each day. And then one day something wakes us up and we come face to face with years of playing "straight" games. The roles we adopted are unbelievable and staggering, not to mention the toll oppression has taken on our lives.

Sane or insane? The medical world finally realized our sexual preferences had nothing to do with our sanity. Yet, many of our people have difficulty making it through life. Many suffer dependency problems -- sexual, drug, alcohol -- many are emotionally crippled by "oppression sickness." They really don't remain sane in world that tries to crush them.

To many of you out there, "coming out" would be insane. For many it would be. The greatest day of my life, however, was when I became insane. Oh, I'd already come out to some very selected "straight" friends, having carefully tested the waters before ever diving. Heck, they already knew who I was anyway.

Things started changing the day I walked into the new MCC. Sweat poured down my back, fear gripped every part of my body. I made myself sit in the second pew from the front, another bold move for me. I looked behind me, and came face to face with an older "straight couple." I muttered some weird excuse (to whom I still don't know) and got up to leave. But I didn't.

I made it through the daylight. I made it through the service in God's house. I was introduced to the older couple and lived. Last week at Bruno's I happened to notice my attire and chuckled to myself. My MCC teeshirt looked quite nice! A couple of people gave me knowing smiles, but most of the shoppers paid no attention to me. Most of them, if they knew what an MCC was wouldn't have cared anyway. Most of your professional associates, your families, your straight friends probably know who you are right now. Some may not want the confrontation of being told, but many would welcome your openness and applaud your courage and honesty.

For years, a small minority ran my life. Now I'm in charge. IT FEELS GOOD!!!

THERE IS NO LONGER AN EXCUSE FOR SPREADING AIDS

Right now in the gay community, we're faced with some extremely difficult decisions because of AIDS -- sexual decisions affecting our lives and life-styles. We Gaymen have come up with a lot of excuses for avoiding the issue.

We all know that safer sex can reduce the risk of contracting and spreading AIDS. Some practices are more effective than others; some we have questions about.

We all need to make informed decisions, not excuses. You'll probably agree that none of the following excuses justify the pread of AIDS in our community:

"WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And it's the community's. Everyone must take a concerned and active role if we're going to stop the spread of this disease.

Here's another common excuse: "If someone doesn't ask me to practice safer sex, I figure that's his decision and I respect it."

Why? Aren't you concerned? Perhaps your partner is just as uncomfortable in raising the issue as you are.

"WHOSE LIFE IS IT, ANYWAY?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And the community's. The excuse, "It's my life," is only partly true. The life of your partner and the well-being of the community are also at stake.

AIDS is not just a physical problem. There are political, social, and economic effects as well. There is already evidence that social freedoms may be restricted because of AIDS. AIDS can be used as an excuse for anti-Gay action and legislation.

Making decisions about sexual practices is difficult. Sticking to those decisions is even more difficult. But this isn't a moral issue; it's a matter of life and death.

"CHANGING MY SEX LIFE ISN"T A CURE FOR AIDS."

That's true. There is no cure or vaccine. And researchers think they are years away from developing one. Safer sexual practices are our best means right now of reducing our risk and stopping the spread of AIDS.

"CHANGE? NOBODY ELSE IS DOING IT!"

The fact is that a major research project conducted by the AIDS Foundation among San Francisco Gaymen revealed that two-thirds of the Gay community is making a serious effort to reduce their risk by practicing safer sex. Two-thirds!

Talk about it. Even though its a difficult subject for everyone, chances are your partner is just as concerned as you are and would probably welcome a chance to discuss it.

Let's stop making excuses. Let's stop the spread of AIDS.

Reprinted from ACTS 29, Newsletter of [illegible]

Rectal gonorrhea has declined 86% since the AIDS scare -- people are aware of risks and are changing their sexual habits. Safe sex works.

Bulletin Board

HOOKER'S BALL - HALLOWEEN NIGHT -- Presented by all your favorite bars and the Order of Osiris. Prizes for costumes, all bars are involved, begins 7:00 p.m. Hallowe'en night, costumes are invited, and you are especially requested to attend this celebration of what is turning into the second most exciting activity of the year.

Birthdays

HAPPY BIRTHDAY - Queen Richard, Oct.9, from all the folks at Esquire House.

Label JARS Not PEOPLE

ANNIVERSARY

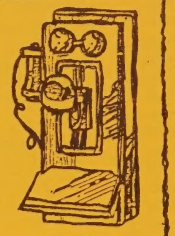
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY - Oct. 5 to Chuck at Troopers on their 2nd Year of fun and support of the community.

HAPPY BELATED ANNIVERSARY TO CPA - We were not notified in time for publication last month, but CPA celebrated their 2nd anniversary on Sept. 27th. Great going, guys!

476-9142

Gay

Help-line



We met at

DAVID'S II

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, Al • 473-5985

from the fellowship

"FREE TO BE"

12TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF MCC

Sacramento, California. The conference got off to an exciting start. Rev. Elders Freda Smith and Nancy Wilson both preached Monday. I especially enjoyed hearing them. The film, "God, Gays, and the Gospel" was also shown for the first time on Monday.

The film, a documentary telling about MCC and what it means, cost about $100,000 to make. Many unique aspects of MCC were brought out. The fact that MCC has membrers from every religious background and the highest proportion of women ministers were particularly interesting.

In the business meetings, a great deal was accomplished in the first few days. The Government Structures and Systems proposal was accepted with some minor amendments. Two changes will have the most immediate impact. One is the adoption of the General Council as the governing body of MCC. The General Council will be composed of the Board of Directors and the District Coordinators, thus giving total regional representation at the highest MCC level. The other change is that there will be only commissioned and chartered churches (instead of the three tier system as previously: Study group, mission, chartered church.). At the conference I was an official observer, with a voice, but without vote. In the future, all delegates will have a vote. Each delegate will represent one hundred members or a portion of 100 if the church is smaller. This means that even the smallest church will have a voting delegate.

All of che elders standing for re-election were elected.

I had an opportunity to sing in the Conference Choir, and attended several workshops, including the Sexuality and Spirituality and Spiritual Gifts workshop.

R.P., Delegate

Check it Out

MCC is the largest Gay/Lesbian organization in the world.

NOW (Nat'l Organization for Women) offers insurance for "significant others" (not just physicians, but alternative medicine as well).

Jerry Falwell and his "Moral Majority" are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars across the country to stop Gay/Lesbian rights.

A local printer refused to print our first newsletter because of its content.

A local bank refused to open a joint bank account for a well-known Gay couple.

The Unitarian-Universalist Association openly supports Gay/Lesbian rights.

Mobile Mental Health has actively trained and offers continued support for the Gay Helpline volunteers.

The Gay Helpline is in operation every night from 6 p.m. to midnight for anyone needing someone to talk to -- check it out.

The local bar owners and managers -- Chuck, Miss Betty, Jim, John, Grace and David -- make the printing and mailing of this newsletter possible.

The bar owners and managers donated money and supplies for the kick-off party to celebrate the opening of the Helpline, and that we will be raising funds for the Helpline from time to time, due to their generosity.

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October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
UU WORSHIP 10:30 AM ev. every Sunday	ROCKY HORROR SHOW AT ESQUIRE WITH OSTRIS	1	2 RAP; Who's on Top-- Power in Relationships.	3		ANNIVERSARY
6 MCC WORSHIP 7:00 P.M. 5:30 New Memb	7	8	9 RAP: Peer Pressure - Handling your friends.	10	11	12 COLUMBUS DAY
13 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 3:00 Shrimp Boil at DAVID'sII UU VOLLEYBALL	14 COLUMBUS DAY OBSERVED	15	16 RAP Cross-Generational Relationships	17	18 UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS 2-DAY WORKSHOP	19 "The Haunting Church"
20 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 5:30 New Memb	21	22	23 RAP HOLDING HANDS Making a political statement.	24	25	26
27 MCC WORSHIP-7pm UU VOLLEYBALL 5:30 New Memb MOTHER-IN-LAW DAY	28	29	30 RAP HOMOPHOBIA -- THEIRS AND OURS	31 HOOKER'S BALL ALL THE BARS HALLOWEEN		

CLASSIFIED ADS

Weekend Sketch Group -- interested? Call the HELPLINE for information.

WRITERS GROUP -- Meet once a month for social contact and constructive criticism of members' work. Bring a piece of writing for criticism, and ke p a log of the number of hours spent wri ting. Contact Shirley L. at the HELPLINE.

BIKERS (no, silly, not that kind!) are being sought for a bike riding group. Ride, bring lunch and picnic-- weather will be perfect soon.

Halloween

FOR SALE: SCM Electric Typewriter, ribbon spool. Best offer. Evenings 8-10. 342-7891, ask for John.

PLUMBING - Indoors, reasonable rates. Expert service. Call evenings after 6, or Mondays, 476-5171, as for Harry.

CLEANING-INTERIOR PAINTING, WALLPAPER. Organize your precious collectibles?? Excellent references in both communities. 476-9142, ask for Shirley.

BOWLING LEAGUE -- Members of MCC want to form a bowling team to hopefully compete against other gay groups (bars, etc.). At least six teams are needed. Call the HELPLINE if you are interested.

SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.
433-9141

SUN. - THURS. 10 A. M. - 2 A.M.
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS

ESQUIRE
BAR & LOUNGE

— Phone 433-9175 —
Mon.-Fri. 9:30 a.m. Till
Sat. 9:30 a.m.-2a.m.
13 South Joachim St. Mobile, Ala.

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FROM THE EDITOR--

Our first issue was a roaring success, so the community tells us. We personally wish to thank the bar owners and managers for making the newsletter a reality, rather than the "dream" so many of us have talked about for the last couple of years. At last we have a way to communicate ideas among gays in Mobile. We also want to apologize to Chuck at Troopers for omitting a news item last month. Thanks for bearing with us and our mistakes -- we'll get it right with practice. A word of thanks to all of you out there from the small group at MCC. Because of you the newsletter will continue to grow, to increase our awareness and to solidify the community.

To date we have received the names "Revelations," "Mobile Pride News," and "Genesis." Don't be bashful. Send or call in your suggestion.

We stated our purpose last month, "to offer a news source for the entire community." We are happy to report that this issue, our second, has accomplished that goal. Sincere applause to each organization and business for your participation. We are open to your suggestions and your criticism. Our new feature. "Community Profile" has already been designated for the November issue. Send in the name of someone you wish to acknowledge in a future issue.

Our editorial policy requires that a name and address be submitted along with newscopy. Your name and address will not be printed without your written consent, but we must have this information to protect the legal position of the church. Please drop editorial copy or editorial replies at the church or mail them to: MCC Newsletter, P.O. Box 8524, Mobile, Ala. 36608. The deadline for all copy is the Third Monday of the Month.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

NEWS FROM THE LESBIAN TASK FORCE OF NOW

Two important pieces of legislation are going to be brought to Congress in this year, NOW has informed us. One, is H.R. 230, the Federal Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights Legislation which is spearheaded by Representative Ted Weiss of Brooklyn, N.Y. and carries the endorsement of 44 other representatives, including Rep. Gerry Studds of Massachusetts, an openly gay legislator. The bill primarily calls for the insertion of the words, "affexional or sexual orientation," throughout the Civil Rights Act of 1964, following the word "color," and in other legislation, like the Equal opportunity Act, where it is inserted after "sex." thus identifying gay and Lesbian discrimination as equal to that against people of color and as pervasive as sexism. Interestingly, the same act speaks against acts of intimidation or violence against gays and Lesbians in the same passage that it speaks about violence against religious groups.

The other piece of legislation is the now infamous McCarran-Walter act, which prohibits certain people from entering the United States because of political or sexual orientation. Farley Mowat, the Canadian author of such dangerous books as the environmental study, "Never Cry Wolf," and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Colombia's Nobel Prize Winning novelist, were both excluded -- and refused to be singled out as special cases -- under this Act. Gay men and women can be refused entry into the U.S. -- and have been -- by the terms of the McCarran Act. It is important for the McCarran Act to not include gays and Lesbians under the heading of those accused of "moral turpitude."

The legislation above is entitled Immigration Exclusion and Deportation Amendments of 1985. The first is HR 230. Your congressional representative will vote on both of these. Make your wishes known. One letter -- one letter -- can make the difference, because very few letters on any subject are received from constituents, and as many as five or six letters can seem like an avalanche. If you are interested in how to write to Congress, call the HELPLINE for a copy of MCC's booklet, Writing to Congress, from MCC's Department of Christian Social Action.

Bulletin Board

ORDER OF OSIRIS - "The Rocky Horror Show" Friday and Saturday, November 1 and 2, Presented by the Order of Osiris and the Esquire House -- at the Esquire House. $5.00 admission. See an Osiris member or your bartender for tickets.

Less than 140 days to Osiris' 5th Anniversary Mardi Gras Ball, February 7, 1986.

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - Study series for 4 weeks on Men's Life and Men's Issues. Call the UU's at 342-6834 for information and starting date (near the end of the month.)

2-day Workshop -- The Haunting Church October 18 and 19 at the UU Fellowship 6345 Old Shell Road.

Volleyball -- every 2nd and 4th Sunday, at 2 P.M. at the UU's, weather permitting.

better gay than grumpy

TROOPERS - Shuffleboard tournaments every Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. Pool tournaments every Thursday at 8:30. Some of the best popcorn in Mobile.

CORRAL - Pool tournament every Monday at 9:00 p.m. Please watch for announcements of upcoming Halloween events.

CPA - Costume contest at midnight in conjunction with Hooker's Ball.

Free buffet every Sunday at 9:30 p.m.

Watch for "Name that Tune" to begin early NOvember on Sunday evenings.

DAVID'S II - Special Guest, Halloween Eve through Saturday, Carmen Del Rio.

First Sunday of October begins David's free buffet from 3-9 p.m., and the Tea Dance.

Shrimp boil, Sunday October 13th, from 3 til? To help raise funds for MCC's HELPLINE and newsletter. $3.00 cover, includes all the boiled shrimp you can eat, along with other goodies.

ESQUIRE - Rocky Horror Show November 1 and 2 at 9:30 p.m. Get your tickets from Esquire or any Osiris member. $5.00 per ticket.

PROFILE

Did you enjoy Mobile's Gay Pride 85? Our first profile is, Harry, organizer and leader of Pride 85. Harry was the catalyst that brought together the various elements of the community. It wasn't his first time out, certainly not his first effort for our benefit. Fifteen years in the Mobile area has seen Harry speaking at the University of South Alabama and Springhill College on Gay/Lesbian issues. He was one of the strong leaders of the old Gulf Alliance for Equality as well.

When Harry isn't working on our behalf, he enjoys meeting the public in his retail profession. While there's still daylight after a hard day at work, you might see him out bicycling or running, or on Sundays offering his talents at the Unitarian-Universalists' worship and fellowship. "My religion," Harry said, has given me a lot more direction in my life, and a greater sense of freedom to allow my own beliefs to evolve."

Harry offered the following thoughts about and reflections on Gay Pride'85: '85 was very successfull considering the late starting date for planning. '84, our first Gay Pride Activity, made '85 much easier to put together. Adding more organizations -- the UU's and MCC -- added much to '85's success. Without Danni B. '85 would not have come toether. A SPECIAL THANKS TO HER.

For 1986 Gay Pride, Harry foresees greatness. "For once, we are starting off with some money, $186.00, thanks to the bars. We will begin planning at a much earlier date, offering the same type of activities, with more variety, however. We will certainly push for more publicity and participation from all the organizations. We want Gay Pride to be financially self-supporting, and there's no reason it shouldn't be if we all work at it."

When asked what he would change if given the right opportunity, Harry offered the following: "I'd like to see more open Gay/Lesbian businesses, organizations, and individuals come out, and a greater media presence for the community. However, the fear of coming out is still our greatest obstacle. Most of us, including me, still face job discrimination, neighborhood harassment, and the possible loss of our families or their strong disapproval."

In a larger context, Harry went on, "Much of our recent publicity has been derogatory. I feel that the Moral Majority uses us as their biggest fundraiser, particularly now that AIDS has come to the forefront of the news media."

Harry is one of the strongest and most open figures in our Mobile Gay Community, and with his support and leadership, gay Mobile should reach the goals which he is helping us set.

SOCIETY LOUNGE - Beginning in October, the first weekend each month, Miss Betty will be presenting weekend shows at 10 and 12 midnight. No cover.

SOMETHING TO SELL, SERVICE TO OFFER?? Call 476-9142 for rates and deadlines. Please NO PERSONALS, except Birthday, Anniversary, Thank You's.

TROOPERS
215 Conti Street
438-9139
HOURS: 11 a.m.-3 a.m.

CORRAL
54 So. Conception
433-9258
Weekdays - Noon Till
Weekends - 24 hours

...from the pastor

SAUL AND ANOMIE

In the late 1800's, the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, coined the word ANOMIE (without a name) to explain the psychological state of strangers, people at the edge of social movements with enormous change, and people who belonged to subcultures where they were unsure of what the social expectations were within a dominant group. They felt, as James Baldwin must have, like "nobody knows my name." As a matter of fact, in a true state of anomie, it's more like "I don't even know my own name." Durkheim postulated that when a society is experiencing great anomie, the suicide rate goes up. When I read of Saul, the first king of Israel in the Bible, I realized that even in Biblical times, people knew the concept of anomie, even though they didn't know the word.

Saul lived in an anomic time. He was a soldier who had been trained in the old skills of warfare before iron was invented. Suddenly, there was iron. And iron was so strong that all the weapons he had been taught to use were nearly useless. So he learned to use iron, but he was never comfortable with it. Then the people of his area learned about a new God, and all the things he was used to in the old gods were outdated. To add to his problems, Jahweh decided Saul should be king of Israel. Saul wasn't from a royal family (there weren't any royal families in Israel -- he was the first) and he didn't know how a king behaved, he'd never even had a king. But Jahweh had selected him to be king. And still worse, his son gets friendly with this David fellow -- and he knows there's something strange there -- but can that fellow play the harp! He wasn't even permitted to ask the seer what was going to happen, and feel secure, he had to trust this Jahweh God. Saul learned to adapt -- but he was never happy with the new ways, and when things really got tough, he looked to his old gods and went over to see the Witch of Endor to find out what the enemy had in store. That was where he and Jahweh God parted. Poor Saul. He was caught in a world he hardly understood! Everything was changing, nothing seemed to have a center. How he wished for the good old days, when the gods were secure, the military knew what they were doing, the country had the right kind of folk leading it, and people knew how to behave-- knew the rules. Saul was so confused, he hardly knew his own name any more. He was a real case of anomie. And eventually, he did what Durkheim postulated -- he committed suicide.

Can you see some parallels? Many people today feel that sense of anomie. The world has changed so rapidly that people are frightened. They want some sense of the past to hold on to. God, they pray, make it safe again, let me know what to expect! Many Christians are at that point. The world has changed so greatly that they are frightened. Nuclear energy, great social upheaval -- especially within the time of the baby boomers; new forms of government--like Communism and socialism -- scare them. The questioning of old beliefs and the arising of new ideas --all of these together are frightening for people who remember how simple it was when everybody knew what to expect. When the milk train stopped and the old time religion had meaning for everyone -- when everyone was American and your neighbor wasn't a Cambodian Buddhist, a Russian Jew, a Japanese Taoist and your son or daughter hadn't picked up some new religion like the Moonies. When sexuality and sex roles were simple -- men were men and women were girls, and nobody they knew was gay. People out there are scared. And they want the old time religion that had meaning and they want to go back to the time when everybody knew the rules. Well, it's that kind of time, and Jerry Falwell plays upon the fears of those people, and promises them "The Old Time Gospel Hour" and tells them who the enemy is (us), and they follow him, and he profits, and profits, and profits.

But maybe there's more to it than that. Durkheim was also talking about anomie being a condition for strangers and sojourners and for people in subcultures. Maybe there's something there for us, as well. Gay liberation has called us to come out -- it has asked us to change our ways and to trust God to help us find a way to be a new kind of gay people-- strong, and open, and fearless. And

SOOM AND DIGNITY TO BEGIN IN MOBILE

Efforts are being made to organize two new organizations for gay and Lesbian people in Mobile. According to John P., who is spearheading the drive, the Silver Owls of Mobile (SOOM) and a Dignity chapter are looking for persons interested in these groups.

SOOM is a social group for older people, usually over the age of 40, and for younger people who like to be with older gays and Lesbians.

Dignity is an organization for gay Catholics and their friends. The chapter will be part of the national organization that consists of over 117 chapters across the nation.

"Too often gay and Lesbian Catholics feel alienated from their church. Dignity has been successful in being a bridge for these people to rebuild a religious life. Also, Dignity has been effective in creating a dialogue with the church's hierarchy," said John P.

He noted that the SOOM organization is simply an attempt to bring people together in a social context. "Many older gays and Lesbians simply have no social place to go except the bars, where they are usually ignored by younger people. SOOM will be an attempt to provide a congenial group for dinner parties, theater and other outings.

Anyone interested in SOOM or Dignity is asked to contact John at 342-7891, or the HELPLINE at 476-9142.

FIRST NIGHTERS

People interested in going to theater: Involves joining Joe Jefferson Players ($25.00 for 6 plays/musicals) plus other theater presentations. Call HELPLINE for further information - 476-9142.

Club Park Ave
#7 S. Joachim St.
Mobile, AL 36602
(205) 433-1236
(205) 433-9195
JIM CRISS
General Manager

maybe we, too, are like the Falwell followers. It was so secure in my closet. I was so comfortable hiding. I really don't need these new, frightening ideas of openness and liberation, do I? Oh, yes, you do. You need them for your mental health, you need them for your ability to be a whole person, you need them in a world of change, so that you can change with the world and not be stuck, as Saul was, in fear. Saul clung to the old gods, and could not trust Jahweh God -- and he lost. Most of us try the same thing. We stick to our old gods, our closetedness and our lies. God sees through us -- God knows who we are, and God loves us enough to invite us to be KING. Be all you can be, be the royal person God invites you to be. The alternative for far too many of us has been Saul's solution, suicide; the death of who we really are or can be. The gay community is growing up, and learning that in taking risks there is strength and growth. Don't be a Saul -- be a David. Take the risks -- and grow!

COMING OUT

I've often heard Rev. Marge quote her friend from Providence, Ray LaRiviere, who coined a phrase about gay attitudes, "As long as I can boogie, I'm free." A lot of us started out the same way. If it hadn't been for Gay/Lesbian bars, we would have had nothing. Work, a relationship, maybe -- and then party time at the bars. But heavens, don't ask me to meet your there before the sun went down.

We remain in our closets, doing nothing, hoping and sometimes even praying that no one ever discovers who we "really are." From birth, almost, we are conditioned that to be Gay/Lesbian is a fate worse than death. So we hide and we die a thousand deaths each day. And then one day something wakes us up and we come face to face with years of playing "straight" games. The roles we adopted are unbelievable and staggering, not to mention the toll oppression has taken on our lives.

Sane or insane? The medical world finally realized our sexual preferences had nothing to do with our sanity. Yet, many of our people have difficulty making it through life. Many suffer dependency problems -- sexual, drug, alcohol -- many are emotionally crippled by "oppression sickness." They really don't remain sane in world that tries to crush them.

To many of you out there, "coming out" would be insane. For many it would be. The greatest day of my life, however, was when I became insane. Oh, I'd already come out to some very selected "straight" friends, having carefully tested the waters before ever diving. Heck, they already knew who I was anyway.

Things started changing the day I walked into the new MCC. Sweat poured down my back, fear gripped every part of my body. I made myself sit in the second pew from the front, another bold move for me. I looked behind me, and came face to face with an older "straight couple." I muttered some weird excuse (to whom I still don't know) and got up to leave. But I didn't.

I made it through the daylight. I made it through the service in God's house. I was introduced to the older couple and lived. Last week at Bruno's I happened to notice my attire and chuckled to myself. My MCC teeshirt looked quite nice! A couple of people gave me knowing smiles, but most of the shoppers paid no attention to me. Most of them, if they knew what an MCC was wouldn't have cared anyway. Most of your professional associates, your families, your straight friends probably know who you are right now. Some may not want the confrontation of being told, but many would welcome your openness and applaud your courage and honesty.

For years, a small minority ran my life. Now I'm in charge. IT FEELS GOOD!!!

THERE IS NO LONGER AN EXCUSE FOR SPREADING AIDS

Right now in the gay community, we're faced with some extremely difficult decisions because of AIDS -- sexual decisions affecting our lives and life-styles. We Gaymen have come up with a lot of excuses for avoiding the issue.

We all know that safer sex can reduce the risk of contracting and spreading AIDS. Some practices are more effective than others; some we have questions about.

We all need to make informed decisions, not excuses. You'll probably agree that none of the following excuses justify the pread of AIDS in our community:

"WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And it's the community's. Everyone must take a concerned and active role if we're going to stop the spread of this disease.

Here's another common excuse: "If someone doesn't ask me to practice safer sex, I figure that's his decision and I respect it."

Why? Aren't you concerned? Perhaps your partner is just as uncomfortable in raising the issue as you are.

"WHOSE LIFE IS IT, ANYWAY?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And the community's. The excuse, "It's my life," is only partly true. The life of your partner and the well-being of the community are also at stake.

AIDS is not just a physical problem. There are political, social, and economic effects as well. There is already evidence that social freedoms may be restricted because of AIDS. AIDS can be used as an excuse for anti-Gay action and legislation.

Making decisions about sexual practices is difficult. Sticking to those decisions is even more difficult. But this isn't a moral issue; it's a matter of life and death.

"CHANGING MY SEX LIFE ISN"T A CURE FOR AIDS."

That's true. There is no cure or vaccine. And researchers think they are years away from developing one. Safer sexual practices are our best means right now of reducing our risk and stopping the spread of AIDS.

"CHANGE? NOBODY ELSE IS DOING IT!"

The fact is that a major research project conducted by the AIDS Foundation among San Francisco Gaymen revealed that two-thirds of the Gay community is making a serious effort to reduce their risk by practicing safer sex. Two-thirds!

Talk about it. Even though its a difficult subject for everyone, chances are your partner is just as concerned as you are and would probably welcome a chance to discuss it.

Let's stop making excuses. Let's stop the spread of AIDS.

Reprinted from ACTS 29, Newsletter of [illegible]

Rectal gonorrhea has declined 86% since the AIDS scare -- people are aware of risks and are changing their sexual habits. Safe sex works.

Bulletin Board

HOOKER'S BALL - HALLOWEEN NIGHT -- Presented by all your favorite bars and the Order of Osiris. Prizes for costumes, all bars are involved, begins 7:00 p.m. Hallowe'en night, costumes are invited, and you are especially requested to attend this celebration of what is turning into the second most exciting activity of the year.

Birthdays

HAPPY BIRTHDAY - Queen Richard, Oct.9, from all the folks at Esquire House.

Label JARS Not PEOPLE

ANNIVERSARY

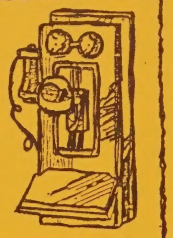
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY - Oct. 5 to Chuck at Troopers on their 2nd Year of fun and support of the community.

HAPPY BELATED ANNIVERSARY TO CPA - We were not notified in time for publication last month, but CPA celebrated their 2nd anniversary on Sept. 27th. Great going, guys!

476-9142

Gay

Help-line



We met at

DAVID'S II

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985

from the fellowship

"FREE TO BE"

12TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF MCC

Sacramento, California. The conference got off to an exciting start. Rev. Elders Freda Smith and Nancy Wilson both preached Monday. I especially enjoyed hearing them. The film, "God, Gays, and the Gospel" was also shown for the first time on Monday.

The film, a documentary telling about MCC and what it means, cost about $100,000 to make. Many unique aspects of MCC were brought out. The fact that MCC has members from every religious background and the highest proportion of women ministers were particularly interesting.

In the business meetings, a great deal was accomplished in the first few days. The Government Structures and Systems proposal was accepted with some minor amendments. Two changes will have the most immediate impact. One is the adoption of the General Council as the governing body of MCC. The General Council will be composed of the Board of Directors and the District Coordinators, thus giving total regional representation at the highest MCC level. The other change is that there will be only commissioned and chartered churches (instead of the three tier system as previously: Study group, mission, chartered church.). At the conference I was an official observer, with a voice, but without vote. In the future, all delegates will have a vote. Each delegate will represent one hundred members or a portion of 100 if the church is smaller. This means that even the smallest church will have a voting delegate.

All of the elders standing for re-election were elected.

I had an opportunity to sing in the Conference Choir, and attended several workshops, including the Sexuality and Spirituality and Spiritual Gifts workshop.

R.P., Delegate

Check it Out

MCC is the largest Gay/Lesbian organization in the world.

NOW (Nat'l Organization for Women) offers insurance for "significant others" (not just physicians, but alternative medicine as well).

Jerry Falwell and his "Moral Majority" are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars across the country to stop Gay/Lesbian rights.

A local printer refused to print our first newsletter because of its content.

A local bank refused to open a joint bank account for a well-known Gay couple.

The Unitarian-Universalist Association openly supports Gay/Lesbian rights.

Mobile Mental Health has actively trained and offers continued support for the Gay Helpline volunteers.

The Gay Helpline is in operation every night from 6 p.m. to midnight for anyone needing someone to talk to -- check it out.

The local bar owners and managers -- Chuck, Miss Betty, Jim, John, Grace and David -- make the printing and mailing of this newsletter possible.

The bar owners and managers donated money and supplies for the kick-off party to celebrate the opening of the Helpline, and that we will be raising funds for the Helpline from time to time, due to their generosity.

October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
MCC WORSHIP 10:30 AM ev. every Sunday	NOVEMBER 1st ROCKY HORROR SHOW AT ESQUIRE WITH OSTRIS	1	2 RAP: What's on Top-- Power in Relationships.	3		FR'S ANNIVERSARY
6 MCC WORSHIP 7:00 P.M. 5:30 New Memb	7	8	9 RAP: Peer Pressure - Handling your friends.	10	11	12 COLUMBUS DAY
13 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 3:00 Shrimp Boil at DAVID'sII UU VOLLEYBALL	14 COLUMBUS DAY OBSERVED	15	16 RAP Cross-Generational Relationships	17	18 UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS 2-DAY WORKSHOP	19 "The Haunting Church"
20 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 5:30 New Memb	21	22	23 RAP HOLDING HANDS Making a political statement.	24	25	26
27 MCC WORSHIP-7pm UU VOLLEYBALL 5:30 New Memb MOTHER-IN-LAW DAY	28	29	30 RAP HOMOPHOBIA -- THEIRS AND OURS	31 HOOKER'S BALL ALL THE BARS HALLOWEEN	SEPTEMBER	NOVEMBER

CLASSIFIED ADS

Weekend Sketch Group -- interested? Call the HELPLINE for information.

WRITERS GROUP -- Meet once a month for social contact and constructive criticism of members' work. Bring a piece of writing for criticism, and ke p a log of the number of hours spent wri ting. Contact Shirley L. at the HELPLINE.

BIKERS (no, silly, not that kind!) are being sought for a bike riding group. Ride, bring lunch and picnic-- weather will be perfect soon.

Halloween

FOR SALE: SCM Electric Typewriter, ribbon spool. Best offer. Evenings 8-10. 342-7891, ask for John.

PLUMBING - Indoors, reasonable rates. Expert service. Call evenings after 6, or Mondays, 476-5171, as for Harry.

CLEANING-INTERIOR PAINTING, WALLPAPER. Organize your precious collectibles?? Excellent references in both communities. 476-9142, ask for Shirley.

BOWLING LEAGUE -- Members of MCC want to form a bowling team to hopefully compete against other gay groups (bars, etc.). At least six teams are needed. Call the HELPLINE if you are interested.

SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.
433-9141

SUN. - THURS. 10 A. M. - 2 A.M.
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS

ESQUIRE
BAR & LOUNGE

— Phone 433-9175 —
Mon.-Fri. 9:30 a.m. Till
Sat. 9:30 a.m.-2a.m.
13 South Joachim St. Mobile, Ala.

The Metropolitan Community Church
AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD — MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA
Pastor — (205) 476-9142

Volume 1, No. 2 — October 1985

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART...

The veil of distaste and misconceptions surrounding the gay segment of the population is nowhere better illustrated than in the film, "God, Gays and the Gospel," a no-nonsense look at the rapid rise of the Metropolitan Community Church.

One of the most poignant plights of gay people in today's world is the denial of their right to worship by most of the traditional organized religions. Almost without exception the Christian faith has taken upon itself the right to refuse gays a part in the Family of God.

The long struggle by MCC founder Rev. Troy Perry to establish a faith, not just for gays but for anyone, is the focus of the film. In concise, to the point terms, the production addresses the sheer magnitude of the work being done and the forward strides being made by Perry and his legion of pastors and congregations.

Since its founding in 1969, MCC has endured everything from ridicule to bombings to burned-out church sanctuaries. More than 17 years later, Perry and his followers have forged a recognized, respected faith wherein all are welcomed. It is a tribute to the ecumenical and accepting nature of this church that 20 per cent of its members are non-gay. It is a true illustration of the overused, misused term, "real Christian people."

Perry, a transplanted Floridian, excluded from the church of his childhood, spent years berating himself as "unacceptable." In the end, he determined that there is no reason -- save for human bigotry and Biblical misinterpretation -- for gays to be denied a right to their faith. Nowhere in the Bible, he points out, is there condemnation of homosexuality as it is understood today. In one of his most moving sermons, he presents a stunning point: "If AIDS is God's "gift" to the homosexual, then is toxic shock syndrome God's "gift" to women for being female? ...or is Legionnaires' Disease God's "gift" to the American Legion for being too patriotic?

From the perspective of a "straight," the message of "God, Gays, and the Gospel" is very much to the point: No human deserves the right to tell another he or she will never be acceptable in the eyes of God. Moreover, it should be remembered that Perry et al are not working for immediate and total social acceptance, but for establishment of a climate of cooperation and understanding.

No "straight" who professes a concern for human rights should let gays bear this struggle alone.

(Note: N.J.Green is MCC at Mobile's "token straight," our assistant organist. Thank God for our "straight" friends.)

MCC MEMBERS-ATTENTION!
Congregational Meeting, October 27, following worship service. Election of officers, other important business, including coming into agreement with GSS changes. REMINDER

FROM THE EDITOR--

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UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - Study series for 4 weeks on Men's Life and Men's Issues. Call the UU's at 342-6834 for information and starting date (near the end of the month.)

2-day Workshop -- The Haunting Church October 18 and 19 at the UU Fellowship 6345 Old Shell Road.

Volleyball -- every 2nd and 4th Sunday, at 2 P.M. at the UU's, weather permitting.

better gay than grumpy

TROOPERS - Shuffleboard tournaments every Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. Pool tournaments every Thursday at 8:30. Some of the best popcorn in Mobile.

CORRAL - Pool tournament every Monday at 9:00 p.m. Please watch for announcements of upcoming Halloween events.

CPA - Costume contest at midnight in conjunction with Hooker's Ball.

Free buffet every Sunday at 9:30 p.m.

Watch for "Name that Tune" to begin early NOvember on Sunday evenings.

DAVID'S II - Special Guest, Halloween Eve through Saturday, Carmen Del Rio.

First Sunday of October begins David's free buffet from 3-9 p.m., and the Tea Dance.

Shrimp boil, Sunday October 13th, from 3 til? To help raise funds for MCC's HELPLINE and newsletter. $3.00 cover, includes all the boiled shrimp you can eat, along with other goodies.

ESQUIRE - Rocky Horror Show November 1 and 2 at 9:30 p.m. Get your tickets from Esquire or any Osiris member. $5.00 per ticket.

PROFILE

Did you enjoy Mobile's Gay Pride 85? Our first profile is, Harry, organizer and leader of Pride 85. Harry was the catalyst that brought together the various elements of the community. It wasn't his first time out, certainly not his first effort for our benefit. Fifteen years in the Mobile area has seen Harry speaking at the University of South Alabama and Springhill College on Gay/Lesbian issues. He was one of the strong leaders of the old Gulf Alliance for Equality as well.

When Harry isn't working on our behalf, he enjoys meeting the public in his retail profession. While there's still daylight after a hard day at work, you might see him out bicycling or running, or on Sundays offering his talents at the Unitarian-Universalists' worship and fellowship. "My religion," Harry said, has given me a lot more direction in my life, and a greater sense of freedom to allow my own beliefs to evolve."

Harry offered the following thoughts about and reflections on Gay Pride'85: '85 was very successfull considering the late starting date for planning. '84, our first Gay Pride Activity, made '85 much easier to put together. Adding more organizations -- the UU's and MCC -- added much to '85's success. Without Danni B. '85 would not have come toether. A SPECIAL THANKS TO HER.

For 1986 Gay Pride, Harry foresees greatness. "For once, we are starting off with some money, $186.00, thanks to the bars. We will begin planning at a much earlier date, offering the same type of activities, with more variety, however. We will certainly push for more publicity and participation from all the organizations. We want Gay Pride to be financially self-supporting, and there's no reason it shouldn't be if we all work at it."

When asked what he would change if given the right opportunity, Harry offered the following: "I'd like to see more open Gay/Lesbian businesses, organizations, and individuals come out, and a greater media presence for the community. However, the fear of coming out is still our greatest obstacle. Most of us, including me, still face job discrimination, neighborhood harassment, and the possible loss of our families or their strong disapproval."

In a larger context, Harry went on, "Much of our recent publicity has been derogatory. I feel that the Moral Majority uses us as their biggest fundraiser, particularly now that AIDS has come to the forefront of the news media."

Harry is one of the strongest and most open figures in our Mobile Gay Community, and with his support and leadership, gay Mobile should reach the goals which he is helping us set.

SOCIETY LOUNGE - Beginning in October, the first weekend each month, Miss Betty will be presenting weekend shows at 10 and 12 midnight. No cover.

SOMETHING TO SELL, SERVICE TO OFFER?? Call 476-9142 for rates and deadlines. Please NO PERSONALS, except Birthday, Anniversary, Thank You's.

TROOPERS
215 Conti Street
438-9139
HOURS: 11 a.m.-3 a.m.

CORRAL
54 So. Conception
433-9258
Weekdays - Noon Till
Weekends - 24 hours

...from the pastor

SAUL AND ANOMIE

In the late 1800's, the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, coined the word ANOMIE (without a name) to explain the psychological state of strangers, people at the edge of social movements with enormous change, and people who belonged to subcultures where they were unsure of what the social expectations were within a dominant group. They felt, as James Baldwin must have, like "nobody knows my name." As a matter of fact, in a true state of anomie, it's more like "I don't even know my own name." Durkheim postulated that when a society is experiencing great anomie, the suicide rate goes up. When I read of Saul, the first king of Israel in the Bible, I realized that even in Biblical times, people knew the concept of anomie, even though they didn't know the word.

Saul lived in an anomic time. He was a soldier who had been trained in the old skills of warfare before iron was invented. Suddenly, there was iron. And iron was so strong that all the weapons he had been taught to use were nearly useless. So he learned to use iron, but he was never comfortable with it. Then the people of his area learned about a new God, and all the things he was used to in the old gods were outdated. To add to his problems, Jahweh decided Saul should be king of Israel. Saul wasn't from a royal family (there weren't any royal families in Israel -- he was the first) and he didn't know how a king behaved, he'd never even had a king. But Jahweh had selected him to be king. And still worse, his son gets friendly with this David fellow -- and he knows there's something strange there -- but can that fellow play the harp! He wasn't even permitted to ask the seer what was going to happen, and feel secure, he had to trust this Jahweh God. Saul learned to adapt -- but he was never happy with the new ways, and when things really got tough, he looked to his old gods and went over to see the Witch of Endor to find out what the enemy had in store. That was where he and Jahweh God parted. Poor Saul. He was caught in a world he hardly understood! Everything was changing, nothing seemed to have a center. How he wished for the good old days, when the gods were secure, the military knew what they were doing, the country had the right kind of folk leading it, and people knew how to behave-- knew the rules. Saul was so confused, he hardly knew his own name any more. He was a real case of anomie. And eventually, he did what Durkheim postulated -- he committed suicide.

Can you see some parallels? Many people today feel that sense of anomie. The world has changed so rapidly that people are frightened. They want some sense of the past to hold on to. God, they pray, make it safe again, let me know what to expect! Many Christians are at that point. The world has changed so greatly that they are frightened. Nuclear energy, great social upheaval -- especially within the time of the baby boomers; new forms of government--like Communism and socialism -- scare them. The questioning of old beliefs and the arising of new ideas --all of these together are frightening for people who remember how simple it was when everybody knew what to expect. When the milk train stopped and the old time religion had meaning for everyone -- when everyone was American and your neighbor wasn't a Cambodian Buddhist, a Russian Jew, a Japanese Taoist and your son or daughter hadn't picked up some new religion like the Moonies. When sexuality and sex roles were simple -- men were men and women were girls, and nobody they knew was gay. People out there are scared. And they want the old time religion that had meaning and they want to go back to the time when everybody knew the rules. Well, it's that kind of time, and Jerry Falwell plays upon the fears of those people, and promises them "The Old Time Gospel Hour" and tells them who the enemy is (us), and they follow him, and he profits, and profits, and profits.

But maybe there's more to it than that. Durkheim was also talking about anomie being a condition for strangers and sojourners and for people in subcultures. Maybe there's something there for us, as well. Gay liberation has called us to come out -- it has asked us to change our ways and to trust God to help us find a way to be a new kind of gay people-- strong, and open, and fearless. And

WELCOME

SOOM AND DIGNITY TO BEGIN IN MOBILE

Efforts are being made to organize two new organizations for gay and Lesbian people in Mobile. According to John P., who is spearheading the drive, the Silver Owls of Mobile (SOOM) and a Dignity chapter are looking for persons interested in these groups.

SOOM is a social group for older people, usually over the age of 40, and for younger people who like to be with older gays and Lesbians.

Dignity is an organization for gay Catholics and their friends. The chapter will be part of the national organization that consists of over 117 chapters across the nation.

"Too often gay and Lesbian Catholics feel alienated from their church. Dignity has been successful in being a bridge for these people to rebuild a religious life. Also, Dignity has been effective in creating a dialogue with the church's hierarchy," said John P.

He noted that the SOOM organization is simply an attempt to bring people together in a social context. "Many older gays and Lesbians simply have no social place to go except the bars, where they are usually ignored by younger people. SOOM will be an attempt to provide a congenial group for dinner parties, theater and other outings.

Anyone interested in SOOM or Dignity is asked to contact John at 342-7891, or the HELPLINE at 476-9142.

FIRST NIGHTERS

People interested in going to theater: Involves joining Joe Jefferson Players ($25.00 for 6 plays/musicals) plus other theater presentations. Call HELPLINE for further information - 476-9142.

Club Park Ave
#7 S. Joachim St.
Mobile, AL 36602
JIM CRISS
General Manager
(205) 433-1236
(205) 433-8185

...from the pastor

maybe we, too, are like the Falwell followers. It was so secure in my closet. I was so comfortable hiding. I really don't need these new, frightening ideas of openness and liberation, do I? Oh, yes, you do. You need them for your mental health, you need them for your ability to be a whole person, you need them in a world of change, so that you can change with the world and not be stuck, as Saul was, in fear. Saul clung to the old gods, and could not trust Jahweh God -- and he lost. Most of us try the same thing. We stick to our old gods, our closetedness and our lies. God sees through us -- God knows who we are, and God loves us enough to invite us to be KING. Be all you can be, be the royal person God invites you to be. The alternative for far too many of us has been Saul's solution, suicide; the death of who we really are or can be. The gay community is growing up, and learning that in taking risks there is strength and growth. Don't be a Saul -- be a David. Take the risks -- and grow!

COMING OUT

I've often heard Rev. Marge quote her friend from Providence, Ray LaRiviere, who coined a phrase about gay attitudes, "As long as I can boogie, I'm free." A lot of us started out the same way. If it hadn't been for Gay/Lesbian bars, we would have had nothing. Work, a relationship, maybe -- and then party time at the bars. But heavens, don't ask me to meet your there before the sun went down.

We remain in our closets, doing nothing, hoping and sometimes even praying that no one ever discovers who we "really are." From birth, almost, we are conditioned that to be Gay/Lesbian is a fate worse than death. So we hide and we die a thousand deaths each day. And then one day something wakes us up and we come face to face with years of playing "straight" games. The roles we adopted are unbelievable and staggering, not to mention the toll oppression has taken on our lives.

Sane or insane? The medical world finally realized our sexual preferences had nothing to do with our sanity. Yet, many of our people have difficulty making it through life. Many suffer dependency problems -- sexual, drug, alcohol -- many are emotionally crippled by "oppression sickness." They really don't remain sane in world that tries to crush them.

To many of you out there, "coming out" would be insane. For many it would be. The greatest day of my life, however, was when I became insane. Oh, I'd already come out to some very selected "straight" friends, having carefully tested the waters before ever diving. Heck, they already knew who I was anyway.

Things started changing the day I walked into the new MCC. Sweat poured down my back, fear gripped every part of my body. I made myself sit in the second pew from the front, another bold move for me. I looked behind me, and came face to face with an older "straight couple." I muttered some weird excuse (to whom I still don't know) and got up to leave. But I didn't.

I made it through the daylight. I made it through the service in God's house. I was introduced to the older couple and lived. Last week at Bruno's I happened to notice my attire and chuckled to myself. My MCC teeshirt looked quite nice! A couple of people gave me knowing smiles, but most of the shoppers paid no attention to me. Most of them, if they knew what an MCC was wouldn't have cared anyway. Most of your professional associates, your families, your straight friends probably know who you are right now. Some may not want the confrontation of being told, but many would welcome your openness and applaud your courage and honesty.

For years, a small minority ran my life. Now I'm in charge. IT FEELS GOOD!!!

THERE IS NO LONGER AN EXCUSE FOR SPREADING AIDS

Right now in the gay community, we're faced with some extremely difficult decisions because of AIDS -- sexual decisions affecting our lives and life-styles. We Gaymen have come up with a lot of excuses for avoiding the issue.

We all know that safer sex can reduce the risk of contracting and spreading AIDS. Some practices are more effective than others; some we have questions about.

We all need to make informed decisions, not excuses. You'll probably agree that none of the following excuses justify the pread of AIDS in our community:

"WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And it's the community's. Everyone must take a concerned and active role if we're going to stop the spread of this disease.

Here's another common excuse: "If someone doesn't ask me to practice safer sex, I figure that's his decision and I respect it."

Why? Aren't you concerned? Perhaps your partner is just as uncomfortable in raising the issue as you are.

"WHOSE LIFE IS IT, ANYWAY?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And the community's. The excuse, "It's my life," is only partly true. The life of your partner and the well-being of the community are also at stake.

AIDS is not just a physical problem. There are political, social, and economic effects as well. There is already evidence that social freedoms may be restricted because of AIDS. AIDS can be used as an excuse for anti-Gay action and legislation.

Making decisions about sexual practices is difficult. Sticking to those decisions is even more difficult. But this isn't a moral issue; it's a matter of life and death.

"CHANGING MY SEX LIFE ISN'T A CURE FOR AIDS."

That's true. There is no cure or vaccine. And researchers think they are years away from developing one. Safer sexual practices are our best means right now of reducing our risk and stopping the spread of AIDS.

"CHANGE? NOBODY ELSE IS DOING IT!"

The fact is that a major research project conducted by the AIDS Foundation among San Francisco Gaymen revealed that two-thirds of the Gay community is making a serious effort to reduce their risk by practicing safer sex. Two-thirds!

Talk about it. Even though its a difficult subject for everyone, chances are your partner is just as concerned as you are and would probably welcome a chance to discuss it.

Let's stop making excuses. Let's stop the spread of AIDS.

Reprinted from ACTS 29, Newsletter of [illegible]

Rectal gonorrhea has declined 86% since the AIDS scare -- people are aware of risks and are changing their sexual habits. Safe sex works.

Bulletin Board

HOOKER'S BALL - HALLOWEEN NIGHT -- Presented by all your favorite bars and the Order of Osiris. Prizes for costumes, all bars are involved, begins 7:00 p.m. Hallowe'en night, costumes are invited, and you are especially requested to attend this celebration of what is turning into the second most exciting activity of the year.

Birthdays

HAPPY BIRTHDAY - Queen Richard, Oct.9, from all the folks at Esquire House.

Label JARS Not PEOPLE

ANNIVERSARY

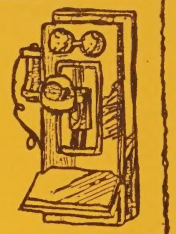
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY - Oct. 5 to Chuck at Troopers on their 2nd Year of fun and support of the community.

HAPPY BELATED ANNIVERSARY TO CPA - We were not notified in time for publication last month, but CPA celebrated their 2nd anniversary on Sept. 27th. Great going, guys!

476-9142

Gay

Help-line



We met at

DAVID'S II

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985

from the fellowship

"FREE TO BE"

12TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF MCC

Sacramento, California. The conference got off to an exciting start. Rev. Elders Freda Smith and Nancy Wilson both preached Monday. I especially enjoyed hearing them. The film, "God, Gays, and the Gospel" was also shown for the first time on Monday.

The film, a documentary telling about MCC and what it means, cost about $100,000 to make. Many unique aspects of MCC were brought out. The fact that MCC has membrers from every religious background and the highest proportion of women ministers were particularly interesting.

In the business meetings, a great deal was accomplished in the first few days. The Government Structures and Systems proposal was accepted with some minor amendments. Two changes will have the most immediate impact. One is the adoption of the General Council as the governing body of MCC. The General Council will be composed of the Board of Directors and the District Coordinators, thus giving total regional representation at the highest MCC level. The other change is that there will be only commissioned and chartered churches (instead of the three tier system as previously: Study group, mission, chartered church.). At the conference I was an official observer, with a voice, but without vote. In the future, all delegates will have a vote. Each delegate will represent one hundred members or a portion of 100 if the church is smaller. This means that even the smallest church will have a voting delegate.

All of the elders standing for re-election were elected.

I had an opportunity to sing in the Conference Choir, and attended several workshops, including the Sexuality and Spirituality and Spiritual Gifts workshop.

R.P., Delegate

Check it Out

MCC is the largest Gay/Lesbian organization in the world.

NOW (Nat'l Organization for Women) offers insurance for "significant others" (not just physicians, but alternative medicine as well).

Jerry Falwell and his "Moral Majority" are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars across the country to stop Gay/Lesbian rights.

A local printer refused to print our first newsletter because of its content.

A local bank refused to open a joint bank account for a well-known Gay couple.

The Unitarian-Universalist Association openly supports Gay/Lesbian rights.

Mobile Mental Health has actively trained and offers continued support for the Gay Helpline volunteers.

The Gay Helpline is in operation every night from 6 p.m. to midnight for anyone needing someone to talk to -- check it out.

The local bar owners and managers -- Chuck, Miss Betty, Jim, John, Grace and David -- make the printing and mailing of this newsletter possible.

The bar owners and managers donated money and supplies for the kick-off party to celebrate the opening of the Helpline, and that we will be raising funds for the Helpline from time to time, due to their generosity.

October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
UU WORSHIP 10:30 AM ev. every Sunday	NOVEMBER 1st ROCKY HORROR SHOW AT ESQUIRE WITH OSTRIS	1	2 RAP; Who's on Top-- Power in Relationships.	3		ER'S ANNIVERSARY
6 MCC WORSHIP 7:00 P.M. 5:30 New Memb	7	8	9 RAP: Peer Pressure - Handling your friends.	10	11	12 COLUMBUS DAY
13 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 3:00 Shrimp Boil at DAVID'S!! UU VOLLEYBALL	14 COLUMBUS DAY OBSERVED	15	16 RAP Cross-Generational Relationships	17	18 UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS 2-DAY WORKSHOP	19 "The Haunting Church"
20 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 5:30 New Memb	21	22	23 RAP HOLDING HANDS Making a political statement.	24	25	26
27 MCC WORSHIP-7pm UU VOLLEYBALL 5:30 New Memb MOTHER-IN-LAW DAY	28	29	30 RAP HOMOPHOBIA -- THEIRS AND OURS	31 HOOKER'S BALL ALL THE BARS HALLOWEEN		

CLASSIFIED ADS

Weekend Sketch Group -- interested? Call the HELPLINE for information.

WRITERS GROUP -- Meet once a month for social contact and constructive criticism of members' work. Bring a piece of writing for criticism, and ke p a log of the number of hours spent wri ting. Contact Shirley L. at the HELPLINE.

BIKERS (no, silly, not that kind!) are being sought for a bike riding group. Ride, bring lunch and picnic-- weather will be perfect soon.

Halloween

FOR SALE: SCM Electric Typewriter, ribbon spool. Best offer. Evenings 8-10. 342-7891, ask for John.

PLUMBING - Indoors, reasonable rates. Expert service. Call evenings after 6, or Mondays, 476-5171, as for Harry.

CLEANING-INTERIOR PAINTING, WALLPAPER. Organize your precious collectibles?? Excellent references in both communities. 476-9142, ask for Shirley.

BOWLING LEAGUE -- Members of MCC want to form a bowling team to hopefully compete against other gay groups (bars, etc.). At least six teams are needed. Call the HELPLINE if you are interested.

SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.
433-9141

SUN. - THURS. 10 A. M. - 2 A.M.
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS

ESQUIRE
BAR & LOUNGE

— Phone 433-9175 —
Mon.-Fri. 9:30 a.m. Till
Sat. 9:30 a.m.-2a.m.
13 South Joachim St. Mobile, Ala.

The Metropolitan Community Church
AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA (205) 476-9142
Pastor

Volume 1, No. 2 October 1985

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART...

The veil of distaste and misconceptions surrounding the gay segment of the population is nowhere better illustrated than in the film, "God, Gays and the Gospel," a no-nonsense look at the rapid rise of the Metropolitan Community Church.

One of the most poignant plights of gay people in today's world is the denial of their right to worship by most of the traditional organized religions. Almost without exception the Christian faith has taken upon itself the right to refuse gays a part in the Family of God.

The long struggle by MCC founder Rev. Troy Perry to establish a faith, not just for gays but for anyone, is the focus of the film. In concise, to the point terms, the production addresses the sheer magnitude of the work being done and the forward strides being made by Perry and his legion of pastors and congregations.

Since its founding in 1969, MCC has endured everything from ridicule to bombings to burned-out church sanctuaries. More than 17 years later, Perry and his followers have forged a recognized, respected faith wherein all are welcomed. It is a tribute to the ecumenical and accepting nature of this church that 20 per cent of its members are non-gay. It is a true illustration of the overused, misused term, "real Christian people."

Perry, a transplanted Floridian, excluded from the church of his childhood, spent years berating himself as "unacceptable." In the end, he determined that there is no reason -- save for human bigotry and Biblical misinterpretation -- for gays to be denied a right to their faith. Nowhere in the Bible, he points out, is there condemnation of homosexuality as it is understood today. In one of his most moving sermons, he presents a stunning point: "If AIDS is God's "gift" to the homosexual, then is toxic shock syndrome God's "gift" to women for being female? ...or is Legionnaires' Disease God's "gift" to the American Legion for being too patriotic?

From the perspective of a "straight," the message of "God, Gays, and the Gospel" is very much to the point: No human deserves the right to tell another he or she will never be acceptable in the eyes of God. Moreover, it should be remembered that Perry et al are not working for immediate and total social acceptance, but for establishment of a climate of cooperation and understanding.

No "straight" who professes a concern for human rights should let gays bear this struggle alone.

(Note: N.J.Green is MCC at Mobile's "token straight," our assistant organist. Thank God for our "straight" friends.)

REMINDER

MCC MEMBERS-ATTENTION!
Congregational Meeting, October 27, following worship service. Election of officers, other important business, including coming into agreement with GSS changes.

FROM THE EDITOR--

Our first issue was a roaring success, so the community tells us. We personally wish to thank the bar owners and managers for making the newsletter a reality, rather than the "dream" so many of us have talked about for the last couple of years. At last we have a way to communicate ideas among gays in Mobile. We also want to apologize to Chuck at Troopers for omitting a news item last month. Thanks for bearing with us and our mistakes -- we'll get it right with practice. A word of thanks to all of you out there from the small group at MCC. Because of you the newsletter will continue to grow, to increase our awareness and to solidify the community.

To date we have received the names "Revelations," "Mobile Pride News," and "Genesis." Don't be bashful. Send or call in your suggestion.

We stated our purpose last month, "to offer a news source for the entire community." We are happy to report that this issue, our second, has accomplished that goal. Sincere applause to each organization and business for your participation. We are open to your suggestions and your criticism. Our new feature. "Community Profile" has already been designated for the November issue. Send in the name of someone you wish to acknowledge in a future issue.

Our editorial policy requires that a name and address be submitted along with newscopy. Your name and address will not be printed without your written consent, but we must have this information to protect the legal position of the church. Please drop editorial copy or editorial replies at the church or mail them to: MCC Newsletter, P.O. Box 8524, Mobile, Ala. 36608. The deadline for all copy is the Third Monday of the Month.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

NEWS FROM THE LESBIAN TASK FORCE OF NOW

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DAVID'S II - Special Guest, Halloween Eve through Saturday, Carmen Del Rio.

First Sunday of October begins David's free buffet from 3-9 p.m., and the Tea Dance.

Shrimp boil, Sunday October 13th, from 3 til? To help raise funds for MCC's HELPLINE and newsletter. $3.00 cover, includes all the boiled shrimp you can eat, along with other goodies.

ESQUIRE - Rocky Horror Show November 1 and 2 at 9:30 p.m. Get your tickets from Esquire or any Osiris member. $5.00 per ticket.

PROFILE

Did you enjoy Mobile's Gay Pride 85? Our first profile is, Harry, organizer and leader of Pride 85. Harry was the catalyst that brought together the various elements of the community. It wasn't his first time out, certainly not his first effort for our benefit. Fifteen years in the Mobile area has seen Harry speaking at the University of South Alabama and Springhill College on Gay/Lesbian issues. He was one of the strong leaders of the old Gulf Alliance for Equality as well.

When Harry isn't working on our behalf, he enjoys meeting the public in his retail profession. While there's still daylight after a hard day at work, you might see him out bicycling or running, or on Sundays offering his talents at the Unitarian-Universalists' worship and fellowship. "My religion," Harry said, has given me a lot more direction in my life, and a greater sense of freedom to allow my own beliefs to evolve."

Harry offered the following thoughts about and reflections on Gay Pride'85: '85 was very successfull considering the late starting date for planning. '84, our first Gay Pride Activity, made '85 much easier to put together. Adding more organizations -- the UU's and MCC -- added much to '85's success. Without Danni B. '85 would not have come toether. A SPECIAL THANKS TO HER.

For 1986 Gay Pride, Harry foresees greatness. "For once, we are starting off with some money, $186.00, thanks to the bars. We will begin planning at a much earlier date, offering the same type of activities, with more variety, however. We will certainly push for more publicity and participation from all the organizations. We want Gay Pride to be financially self-supporting, and there's no reason it shouldn't be if we all work at it."

When asked what he would change if given the right opportunity, Harry offered the following: "I'd like to see more open Gay/Lesbian businesses, organizations, and individuals come out, and a greater media presence for the community. However, the fear of coming out is still our greatest obstacle. Most of us, including me, still face job discrimination, neighborhood harassment, and the possible loss of our families or their strong disapproval."

In a larger context, Harry went on, "Much of our recent publicity has been derogatory. I feel that the Moral Majority uses us as their biggest fundraiser, particularly now that AIDS has come to the forefront of the news media."

Harry is one of the strongest and most open figures in our Mobile Gay Community, and with his support and leadership, gay Mobile should reach the goals which he is helping us set.

SOCIETY LOUNGE -- Beginning in October, the first weekend each month, Miss Betty will be presenting weekend shows at 10 and 12 midnight. No cover.

SOMETHING TO SELL, SERVICE TO OFFER?? Call 476-9142 for rates and deadlines. Please NO PERSONALS, except Birthday, Anniversary, Thank You's.

TROOPERS
215 Conti Street
438-9139
HOURS: 11 a.m.-3 a.m.

CORRAL
54 So. Conception
433-9258
Weekdays - Noon Till
Weekends - 24 hours

...from the pastor

SAUL AND ANOMIE

In the late 1800's, the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, coined the word ANOMIE (without a name) to explain the psychological state of strangers, people at the edge of social movements with enormous change, and people who belonged to subcultures where they were unsure of what the social expectations were within a dominant group. They felt, as James Baldwin must have, like "nobody knows my name." As a matter of fact, in a true state of anomie, it's more like "I don't even know my own name." Durkheim postulated that when a society is experiencing great anomie, the suicide rate goes up. When I read of Saul, the first king of Israel in the Bible, I realized that even in Biblical times, people knew the concept of anomie, even though they didn't know the word.

Saul lived in an anomic time. He was a soldier who had been trained in the old skills of warfare before iron was invented. Suddenly, there was iron. And iron was so strong that all the weapons he had been taught to use were nearly useless. So he learned to use iron, but he was never comfortable with it. Then the people of his area learned about a new God, and all the things he was used to in the old gods were outdated. To add to his problems, Jahweh decided Saul should be king of Israel. Saul wasn't from a royal family (there weren't any royal families in Israel -- he was the first) and he didn't know how a king behaved, he'd never even had a king. But Jahweh had selected him to be king. And still worse, his son gets friendly with this David fellow -- and he knows there's something strange there -- but can that fellow play the harp! He wasn't even permitted to ask the seer what was going to happen, and feel secure, he had to trust this Jahweh God. Saul learned to adapt -- but he was never happy with the new ways, and when things really got tough, he looked to his old gods and went over to see the Witch of Endor to find out what the enemy had in store. That was where he and Jahweh God parted. Poor Saul. He was caught in a world he hardly understood! Everything was changing, nothing seemed to have a center. How he wished for the good old days, when the gods were secure, the military knew what they were doing, the country had the right kind of folk leading it, and people knew how to behave-- knew the rules. Saul was so confused, he hardly knew his own name any more. He was a real case of anomie. And eventually, he did what Durkheim postulated -- he committed suicide.

Can you see some parallels? Many people today feel that sense of anomie. The world has changed so rapidly that people are frightened. They want some sense of the past to hold on to. God, they pray, make it safe again, let me know what to expect! Many Christians are at that point. The world has changed so greatly that they are frightened. Nuclear energy, great social upheaval -- especially within the time of the baby boomers; new forms of government--like Communism and socialism -- scare them. The questioning of old beliefs and the arising of new ideas --all of these together are frightening for people who remember how simple it was when everybody knew what to expect. When the milk train stopped and the old time religion had meaning for everyone -- when everyone was American and your neighbor wasn't a Cambodian Buddhist, a Russian Jew, a Japanese Taoist and your son or daughter hadn't picked up some new religion like the Moonies. When sexuality and sex roles were simple -- men were men and women were girls, and nobody they knew was gay. People out there are scared. And they want the old time religion that had meaning and they want to go back to the time when everybody knew the rules. Well, it's that kind of time, and Jerry Falwell plays upon the fears of those people, and promises them "The Old Time Gospel Hour" and tells them who the enemy is (us), and they follow him, and he profits, and profits, and profits.

But maybe there's more to it than that. Durkheim was also talking about anomie being a condition for strangers and sojourners and for people in subcultures. Maybe there's something there for us, as well. Gay liberation has called us to come out -- it has asked us to change our ways and to trust God to help us find a way to be a new kind of gay people-- strong, and open, and fearless. And

SOOM AND DIGNITY TO BEGIN IN MOBILE

Efforts are being made to organize two new organizations for gay and Lesbian people in Mobile. According to John P., who is spearheading the drive, the Silver Owls of Mobile (SOOM) and a Dignity chapter are looking for persons interested in these groups.

SOOM is a social group for older people, usually over the age of 40, and for younger people who like to be with older gays and Lesbians.

Dignity is an organization for gay Catholics and their friends. The chapter will be part of the national organization that consists of over 117 chapters across the nation.

"Too often gay and Lesbian Catholics feel alienated from their church. Dignity has been successful in being a bridge for these people to rebuild a religious life. Also, Dignity has been effective in creating a dialogue with the church's hierarchy," said John P.

He noted that the SOOM organization is simply an attempt to bring people together in a social context. "Many older gays and Lesbians simply have no social place to go except the bars, where they are usually ignored by younger people. SOOM will be an attempt to provide a congenial group for dinner parties, theater and other outings.

Anyone interested in SOOM or Dignity is asked to contact John at 342-7891, or the HELPLINE at 476-9142.

FIRST NIGHTERS

People interested in going to theater: Involves joining Joe Jefferson Players ($25.00 for 6 plays/musicals) plus other theater presentations. Call HELPLINE for further information - 476-9142.

Club Park Ave
#7 S. Joachim St.
Mobile, AL 36602
(205) 433-1236
JIM CRISS
General Manager

...from the pastor

maybe we, too, are like the Falwell followers. It was so secure in my closet. I was so comfortable hiding. I really don't need these new, frightening ideas of openness and liberation, do I? Oh, yes, you do. You need them for your mental health, you need them for your ability to be a whole person, you need them in a world of change, so that you can change with the world and not be stuck, as Saul was, in fear. Saul clung to the old gods, and could not trust Jahweh God -- and he lost. Most of us try the same thing. We stick to our old gods, our closetedness and our lies. God sees through us -- God knows who we are, and God loves us enough to invite us to be KING. Be all you can be, be the royal person God invites you to be. The alternative for far too many of us has been Saul's solution, suicide; the death of who we really are or can be. The gay community is growing up, and learning that in taking risks there is strength and growth. Don't be a Saul -- be a David. Take the risks -- and grow!

COMING OUT

I've often heard Rev. Marge quote her friend from Providence, Ray LaRiviere, who coined a phrase about gay attitudes, "As long as I can boogie, I'm free." A lot of us started out the same way. If it hadn't been for Gay/Lesbian bars, we would have had nothing. Work, a relationship, maybe -- and then party time at the bars. But heavens, don't ask me to meet your there before the sun went down.

We remain in our closets, doing nothing, hoping and sometimes even praying that no one ever discovers who we "really are." From birth, almost, we are conditioned that to be Gay/Lesbian is a fate worse than death. So we hide and we die a thousand deaths each day. And then one day something wakes us up and we come face to face with years of playing "straight" games. The roles we adopted are unbelievable and staggering, not to mention the toll oppression has taken on our lives.

Sane or insane? The medical world finally realized our sexual preferences had nothing to do with our sanity. Yet, many of our people have difficulty making it through life. Many suffer dependency problems -- sexual, drug, alcohol -- many are emotionally crippled by "oppression sickness." They really don't remain sane in world that tries to crush them.

To many of you out there, "coming out" would be insane. For many it would be. The greatest day of my life, however, was when I became insane. Oh, I'd already come out to some very selected "straight" friends, having carefully tested the waters before ever diving. Heck, they already knew who I was anyway.

Things started changing the day I walked into the new MCC. Sweat poured down my back, fear gripped every part of my body. I made myself sit in the second pew from the front, another bold move for me. I looked behind me, and came face to face with an older "straight couple." I muttered some weird excuse (to whom I still don't know) and got up to leave. But I didn't.

I made it through the daylight. I made it through the service in God's house. I was introduced to the older couple and lived. Last week at Bruno's I happened to notice my attire and chuckled to myself. My MCC teeshirt looked quite nice! A couple of people gave me knowing smiles, but most of the shoppers paid no attention to me. Most of them, if they knew what an MCC was wouldn't have cared anyway. Most of your professional associates, your families, your straight friends probably know who you are right now. Some may not want the confrontation of being told, but many would welcome your openness and applaud your courage and honesty.

For years, a small minority ran my life. Now I'm in charge. IT FEELS GOOD!!!

THERE IS NO LONGER AN EXCUSE FOR SPREADING AIDS

Right now in the gay community, we're faced with some extremely difficult decisions because of AIDS -- sexual decisions affecting our lives and life-styles. We Gaymen have come up with a lot of excuses for avoiding the issue.

We all know that safer sex can reduce the risk of contracting and spreading AIDS. Some practices are more effective than others; some we have questions about.

We all need to make informed decisions, not excuses. You'll probably agree that none of the following excuses justify the pread of AIDS in our community:

"WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And it's the community's. Everyone must take a concerned and active role if we're going to stop the spread of this disease.

Here's another common excuse: "If someone doesn't ask me to practice safer sex, I figure that's his decision and I respect it."

Why? Aren't you concerned? Perhaps your partner is just as uncomfortable in raising the issue as you are.

"WHOSE LIFE IS IT, ANYWAY?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And the community's. The excuse, "It's my life," is only partly true. The life of your partner and the well-being of the community are also at stake.

AIDS is not just a physical problem. There are political, social, and economic effects as well. There is already evidence that social freedoms may be restricted because of AIDS. AIDS can be used as an excuse for anti-Gay action and legislation.

Making decisions about sexual practices is difficult. Sticking to those decisions is even more difficult. But this isn't a moral issue; it's a matter of life and death.

"CHANGING MY SEX LIFE ISN"T A CURE FOR AIDS."

That's true. There is no cure or vaccine. And researchers think they are years away from developing one. Safer sexual practices are our best means right now of reducing our risk and stopping the spread of AIDS.

"CHANGE? NOBODY ELSE IS DOING IT!"

The fact is that a major research project conducted by the AIDS Foundation among San Francisco Gaymen revealed that two-thirds of the Gay community is making a serious effort to reduce their risk by practicing safer sex. Two-thirds!

Talk about it. Even though its a difficult subject for everyone, chances are your partner is just as concerned as you are and would probably welcome a chance to discuss it.

Let's stop making excuses. Let's stop the spread of AIDS.

Reprinted from ACTS 29, Newsletter of [illegible]

Rectal gonorrhea has declined 86% since the AIDS scare -- people are aware of risks and are changing their sexual habits. Safe sex works.

HOOKER'S BALL - HALLOWEEN NIGHT -- Presented by all your favorite bars and the Order of Osiris. Prizes for costumes, all bars are involved, begins 7:00 p.m. Hallowe'en night, costumes are invited, and you are especially requested to attend this celebration of what is turning into the second most exciting activity of the year.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY - Queen Richard, Oct.9, from all the folks at Esquire House.

Label JARS Not PEOPLE

ANNIVERSARY

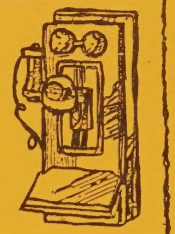
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY - Oct. 5 to Chuck at Troopers on their 2nd Year of fun and support of the community.

HAPPY BELATED ANNIVERSARY TO CPA - We were not notified in time for publication last month, but CPA celebrated their 2nd anniversary on Sept. 27th. Great going, guys!

476-9142

Gay

Help-line



We met at

DAVID'S II

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985

from the fellowship

"FREE TO BE"

12TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF MCC

Sacramento, California. The conference got off to an exciting start. Rev. Elders Freda Smith and Nancy Wilson both preached Monday. I especially enjoyed hearing them. The film, "God, Gays, and the Gospel" was also shown for the first time on Monday.

The film, a documentary telling about MCC and what it means, cost about $100,000 to make. Many unique aspects of MCC were brought out. The fact that MCC has membrers from every religious background and the highest proportion of women ministers were particularly interesting.

In the business meetings, a great deal was accomplished in the first few days. The Government Structures and Systems proposal was accepted with some minor amendments. Two changes will have the most immediate impact. One is the adoption of the General Council as the governing body of MCC. The General Council will be composed of the Board of Directors and the District Coordinators, thus giving total regional representation at the highest MCC level. The other change is that there will be only commissioned and chartered churches (instead of the three tier system as previously: Study group, mission, chartered church.). At the conference I was an official observer, with a voice, but without vote. In the future, all delegates will have a vote. Each delegate will represent one hundred members or a portion of 100 if the church is smaller. This means that even the smallest church will have a voting delegate.

All of the elders standing for re-election were elected.

I had an opportunity to sing in the Conference Choir, and attended several workshops, including the Sexuality and Spirituality and Spiritual Gifts workshop.

R.P., Delegate

Check it Out

MCC is the largest Gay/Lesbian organization in the world.

NOW (Nat'l Organization for Women) offers insurance for "significant others" (not just physicians, but alternative medicine as well).

Jerry Falwell and his "Moral Majority" are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars across the country to stop Gay/Lesbian rights.

A local printer refused to print our first newsletter because of its content.

A local bank refused to open a joint bank account for a well-known Gay couple.

The Unitarian-Universalist Association openly supports Gay/Lesbian rights.

Mobile Mental Health has actively trained and offers continued support for the Gay Helpline volunteers.

The Gay Helpline is in operation every night from 6 p.m. to midnight for anyone needing someone to talk to -- check it out.

The local bar owners and managers -- Chuck, Miss Betty, Jim, John, Grace and David -- make the printing and mailing of this newsletter possible.

The bar owners and managers donated money and supplies for the kick-off party to celebrate the opening of the Helpline, and that we will be raising funds for the Helpline from time to time, due to their generosity.

October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
MCC WORSHIP 10:30 AM ev. every Sunday	NOVEMBER 1st ROCKY HORROR SHOW AT ESQUIRE WITH OSTRIS	1	2 RAP; Who's on Top-- Power in Relationships.	3		[illegible] ANNIVERSARY
6 MCC WORSHIP 7:00 P.M. 5:30 New Memb	7	8	9 RAP: Peer Pressure - Handling your friends.	10	11	12 COLUMBUS DAY
13 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 3:00Shrimp Boil at DAVID'S!! UU VOLLEYBALL	14 COLUMBUS DAY OBSERVED	15	16 RAP Cross-Generational Relationships	17	18 UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS 2-DAY WORKSHOP	19 "The Haunting Church"
20 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 5:30 New Memb	21	22	23 RAP HOLDING HANDS Making a political statement.	24	25	26
27 MCC WORSHIP-7pm UU VOLLEYBALL 5:30 New Memb MOTHER-IN-LAW DAY	28	29	30 RAP HOMOPHOBIA -- THEIRS AND OURS	31 HOOKER'S BALL ALL THE BARS HALLOWEEN		

CLASSIFIED ADS

Weekend Sketch Group -- interested? Call the HELPLINE for information.

WRITERS GROUP -- Meet once a month for social contact and constructive criticism of members' work. Bring a piece of writing for criticism, and ke p a log of the number of hours spent wri ting. Contact Shirley L. at the HELPLINE.

BIKERS (no, silly, not that kind!) are being sought for a bike riding group. Ride, bring lunch and picnic-- weather will be perfect soon.

Halloween

FOR SALE: SCM Electric Typewriter, ribbon spool. Best offer. Evenings 8-10. 342-7891, ask for John.

PLUMBING - Indoors, reasonable rates. Expert service. Call evenings after 6, or Mondays, 476-5171, as for Harry.

CLEANING-INTERIOR PAINTING, WALLPAPER. Organize your precious collectibles?? Excellent references in both communities. 476-9142, ask for Shirley.

BOWLING LEAGUE -- Members of MCC want to form a bowling team to hopefully compete against other gay groups (bars, etc.). At least six teams are needed. Call the HELPLINE if you are interested.

SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.
433-9141

SUN. - THURS. 10 A. M. - 2 A.M.
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS

ESQUIRE
BAR & LOUNGE

— Phone 433-9175 —
Mon.-Fri. 9:30 a.m. Till
Sat. 9:30 a.m.-2a.m.
13 South Joachim St. Mobile, Ala.

The Metropolitan Community Church
AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA (205) 476-9142
Pastor

Volume 1, No. 2 October 1985

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART...

The veil of distaste and misconceptions surrounding the gay segment of the population is nowhere better illustrated than in the film, "God, Gays and the Gospel," a no-nonsense look at the rapid rise of the Metropolitan Community Church.

One of the most poignant plights of gay people in today's world is the denial of their right to worship by most of the traditional organized religions. Almost without exception the Christian faith has taken upon itself the right to refuse gays a part in the Family of God.

The long struggle by MCC founder Rev. Troy Perry to establish a faith, not just for gays but for anyone, is the focus of the film. In concise, to the point terms, the production addresses the sheer magnitude of the work being done and the forward strides being made by Perry and his legion of pastors and congregations.

Since its founding in 1969, MCC has endured everything from ridicule to bombings to burned-out church sanctuaries. More than 17 years later, Perry and his followers have forged a recognized, respected faith wherein all are welcomed. It is a tribute to the ecumenical and accepting nature of this church that 20 per cent of its members are non-gay. It is a true illustration of the overused, misused term, "real Christian people."

Perry, a transplanted Floridian, excluded from the church of his childhood, spent years berating himself as "unacceptable." In the end, he determined that there is no reason -- save for human bigotry and Biblical misinterpretation -- for gays to be denied a right to their faith. Nowhere in the Bible, he points out, is there condemnation of homosexuality as it is understood today. In one of his most moving sermons, he presents a stunning point: "If AIDS is God's "gift" to the homosexual, then is toxic shock syndrome God's "gift" to women for being female? ...or is Legionnaires' Disease God's "gift" to the American Legion for being too patriotic?

From the perspective of a "straight," the message of "God, Gays, and the Gospel" is very much to the point: No human deserves the right to tell another he or she will never be acceptable in the eyes of God. Moreover, it should be remembered that Perry et al are not working for immediate and total social acceptance, but for establishment of a climate of cooperation and understanding.

No "straight" who professes a concern for human rights should let gays bear this struggle alone.

(Note: N.J.Green is MCC at Mobile's "token straight," our assistant organist. Thank God for our "straight" friends.)

REMINDER

MCC MEMBERS-ATTENTION!
Congregational Meeting, October 27, following worship service. Election of officers, other important business, including coming into agreement with GSS changes.

FROM THE EDITOR--

Our first issue was a roaring success, so the community tells us. We personally wish to thank the bar owners and managers for making the newsletter a reality, rather than the "dream" so many of us have talked about for the last couple of years. At last we have a way to communicate ideas among gays in Mobile. We also want to apologize to Chuck at Troopers for omitting a news item last month. Thanks for bearing with us and our mistakes -- we'll get it right with practice. A word of thanks to all of you out there from the small group at MCC. Because of you the newsletter will continue to grow, to increase our awareness and to solidify the community.

To date we have received the names "Revelations," "Mobile Pride News," and "Genesis." Don't be bashful. Send or call in your suggestion.

We stated our purpose last month, "to offer a news source for the entire community." We are happy to report that this issue, our second, has accomplished that goal. Sincere applause to each organization and business for your participation. We are open to your suggestions and your criticism. Our new feature, "Community Profile" has already been designated for the November issue. Send in the name of someone you wish to acknowledge in a future issue.

Our editorial policy requires that a name and address be submitted along with newscopy. Your name and address will not be printed without your written consent, but we must have this information to protect the legal position of the church. Please drop editorial copy or editorial replies at the church or mail them to: MCC Newsletter, P.O. Box 8524, Mobile, Ala. 36608. The deadline for all copy is the Third Monday of the Month.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

NEWS FROM THE LESBIAN TASK FORCE OF NOW

Two important pieces of legislation are going to be brought to Congress in this year, NOW has informed us. One, is H.R. 230, the Federal Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights Legislation which is spearheaded by Representative Ted Weiss of Brooklyn, N.Y. and carries the endorsement of 44 other representatives, including Rep. Gerry Studds of Massachusetts, an openly gay legislator. The bill primarily calls for the insertion of the words, "affexional or sexual orientation," throughout the Civil Rights Act of 1964, following the word "color," and in other legislation, like the Equal opportunity Act, where it is inserted after "sex." thus identifying gay and Lesbian discrimination as equal to that against people of color and as pervasive as sexism. Interestingly, the same act speaks against acts of intimidation or violence against gays and Lesbians in the same passage that it speaks about violence against religious groups.

The other piece of legislation is the now infamous McCarran-Walter act, which prohibits certain people from entering the United States because of political or sexual orientation. Farley Mowat, the Canadian author of such dangerous books as the environmental study, "Never Cry Wolf," and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Colombia's Nobel Prize Winning novelist, were both excluded -- and refused to be singled out as special cases -- under this Act. Gay men and women can be refused entry into the U.S. -- and have been -- by the terms of the McCarran Act. It is important for the McCarran Act to not include gays and Lesbians under the heading of those accused of "moral turpitude."

The legislation above is entitled Immigration Exclusion and Deportation Amendments of 1985. The first is HR 230. Your congressional representative will vote on both of these. Make your wishes known. One letter -- one letter -- can make the difference, because very few letters on any subject are received from constituents, and as many as five or six letters can seem like an avalanche. If you are interested in how to write to Congress, call the HELPLINE for a copy of MCC's booklet, Writing to Congress, from MCC's Department of Christian Social Action.

Bulletin Board

ORDER OF OSIRIS - "The Rocky Horror Show" Friday and Saturday, November 1 and 2, Presented by the Order of Osiris and the Esquire House -- at the Esquire House. $5.00 admission. See an Osiris member or your bartender for tickets.

Less than 140 days to Osiris' 5th Anniversary Mardi Gras Ball, February 7, 1986.

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - Study series for 4 weeks on Men's Life and Men's Issues. Call the UU's at 342-6834 for information and starting date (near the end of the month.)

2-day Workshop -- The Haunting Church October 18 and 19 at the UU Fellowship 6345 Old Shell Road.

Volleyball -- every 2nd and 4th Sunday, at 2 P.M. at the UU's, weather permitting.

better gay than grumpy

TROOPERS - Shuffleboard tournaments every Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. Pool tournaments every Thursday at 8:30. Some of the best popcorn in Mobile.

CORRAL - Pool tournament every Monday at 9:00 p.m. Please watch for announcements of upcoming Halloween events.

CPA - Costume contest at midnight in conjunction with Hooker's Ball.

Free buffet every Sunday at 9:30 p.m.

Watch for "Name that Tune" to begin early NOvember on Sunday evenings.

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Harry is one of the strongest and most open figures in our Mobile Gay Community, and with his support and leadership, gay Mobile should reach the goals which he is helping us set.

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SOMETHING TO SELL, SERVICE TO OFFER?? Call 476-9142 for rates and deadlines. Please NO PERSONALS, except Birthday, Anniversary, Thank You's.

TROOPERS
215 Conti Street
438-9139
HOURS: 11 a.m.-3 a.m.

CORRAL
54 So. Conception
433-9258
Weekdays - Noon Till
Weekends - 24 hours

THERE IS NO LONGER AN EXCUSE FOR SPREADING AIDS

Right now in the gay community, we're faced with some extremely difficult decisions because of AIDS -- sexual decisions affecting our lives and life-styles. We Gaymen have come up with a lot of excuses for avoiding the issue.

We all know that safer sex can reduce the risk of contracting and spreading AIDS. Some practices are more effective than others; some we have questions about.

We all need to make informed decisions, not excuses. You'll probably agree that none of the following excuses justify the pread of AIDS in our community:

"WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And it's the community's. Everyone must take a concerned and active role if we're going to stop the spread of this disease.

Here's another common excuse: "If someone doesn't ask me to practice safer sex, I figure that's his decision and I respect it."

Why? Aren't you concerned? Perhaps your partner is just as uncomfortable in raising the issue as you are.

"WHOSE LIFE IS IT, ANYWAY?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And the community's. The excuse, "It's my life," is only partly true. The life of your partner and the well-being of the community are also at stake.

AIDS is not just a physical problem. There are political, social, and economic effects as well. There is already evidence that social freedoms may be restricted because of AIDS. AIDS can be used as an excuse for anti-Gay action and legislation.

Making decisions about sexual practices is difficult. Sticking to those decisions is even more difficult. But this isn't a moral issue; it's a matter of life and death.

"CHANGING MY SEX LIFE ISN'T A CURE FOR AIDS."

That's true. There is no cure or vaccine. And researchers think they are years away from developing one. Safer sexual practices are our best means right now of reducing our risk and stopping the spread of AIDS.

"CHANGE? NOBODY ELSE IS DOING IT!"

The fact is that a major research project conducted by the AIDS Foundation among San Francisco Gaymen revealed that two-thirds of the Gay community is making a serious effort to reduce their risk by practicing safer sex. Two-thirds!

Talk about it. Even though its a difficult subject for everyone, chances are your partner is just as concerned as you are and would probably welcome a chance to discuss it.

Let's stop making excuses. Let's stop the spread of AIDS.

Reprinted from ACTS 29, Newsletter of [illegible]

Rectal gonorrhea has declined 86% since the AIDS scare -- people are aware of risks and are changing their sexual habits. Safe sex works.

Bulletin Board

HOOKER'S BALL - HALLOWEEN NIGHT -- Presented by all your favorite bars and the Order of Osiris. Prizes for costumes, all bars are involved, begins 7:00 p.m. Hallowe'en night, costumes are invited, and you are especially requested to attend this celebration of what is turning into the second most exciting activity of the year.

Birthdays

HAPPY BIRTHDAY - Queen Richard, Oct.9, from all the folks at Esquire House.

Label JARS Not PEOPLE

ANNIVERSARY

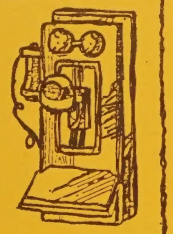
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY - Oct. 5 to Chuck at Troopers on their 2nd Year of fun and support of the community.

HAPPY BELATED ANNIVERSARY TO CPA - We were not notified in time for publication last month, but CPA celebrated their 2nd anniversary on Sept. 27th. Great going, guys!

476-9142

Gay

Help-line



We met at

DAVID'S II

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985

from the fellowship

"FREE TO BE"

12TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF MCC

Sacramento, California. The conference got off to an exciting start. Rev. Elders Freda Smith and Nancy Wilson both preached Monday. I especially enjoyed hearing them. The film, "God, Gays, and the Gospel" was also shown for the first time on Monday.

The film, a documentary telling about MCC and what it means, cost about $100,000 to make. Many unique aspects of MCC were brought out. The fact that MCC has membrers from every religious background and the highest proportion of women ministers were particularly interesting.

In the business meetings, a great deal was accomplished in the first few days. The Government Structures and Systems proposal was accepted with some minor amendments. Two changes will have the most immediate impact. One is the adoption of the General Council as the governing body of MCC. The General Council will be composed of the Board of Directors and the District Coordinators, thus giving total regional representation at the highest MCC level. The other change is that there will be only commissioned and chartered churches (instead of the three tier system as previously: Study group, mission, chartered church.). At the conference I was an official observer, with a voice, but without vote. In the future, all delegates will have a vote. Each delegate will represent one hundred members or a portion of 100 if the church is smaller. This means that even the smallest church will have a voting delegate.

All of the elders standing for re-election were elected.

I had an opportunity to sing in the Conference Choir, and attended several workshops, including the Sexuality and Spirituality and Spiritual Gifts workshop.

R.P., Delegate

Check it Out

MCC is the largest Gay/Lesbian organization in the world.

NOW (Nat'l Organization for Women) offers insurance for "significant others" (not just physicians, but alternative medicine as well).

Jerry Falwell and his "Moral Majority" are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars across the country to stop Gay/Lesbian rights.

A local printer refused to print our first newsletter because of its content.

A local bank refused to open a joint bank account for a well-known Gay couple.

The Unitarian-Universalist Association openly supports Gay/Lesbian rights.

Mobile Mental Health has actively trained and offers continued support for the Gay Helpline volunteers.

The Gay Helpline is in operation every night from 6 p.m. to midnight for anyone needing someone to talk to -- check it out.

The local bar owners and managers -- Chuck, Miss Betty, Jim, John, Grace and David -- make the printing and mailing of this newsletter possible.

The bar owners and managers donated money and supplies for the kick-off party to celebrate the opening of the Helpline, and that we will be raising funds for the Helpline from time to time, due to their generosity.

...from the pastor

SAUL AND ANOMIE

In the late 1800's, the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, coined the word ANOMIE (without a name) to explain the psychological state of strangers, people at the edge of social movements with enormous change, and people who belonged to subcultures where they were unsure of what the social expectations were within a dominant group. They felt, as James Baldwin must have, like "nobody knows my name." As a matter of fact, in a true state of anomie, it's more like "I don't even know my own name." Durkheim postulated that when a society is experiencing great anomie, the suicide rate goes up. When I read of Saul, the first king of Israel in the Bible, I realized that even in Biblical times, people knew the concept of anomie, even though they didn't know the word.

Saul lived in an anomic time. He was a soldier who had been trained in the old skills of warfare before iron was invented. Suddenly, there was iron. And iron was so strong that all the weapons he had been taught to use were nearly useless. So he learned to use iron, but he was never comfortable with it. Then the people of his area learned about a new God, and all the things he was used to in the old gods were outdated. To add to his problems, Jahweh decided Saul should be king of Israel. Saul wasn't from a royal family (there weren't any royal families in Israel -- he was the first) and he didn't know how a king behaved, he'd never even had a king. But Jahweh had selected him to be king. And still worse, his son gets friendly with this David fellow -- and he knows there's something strange there -- but can that fellow play the harp! He wasn't even permitted to ask the seer what was going to happen, and feel secure, he had to trust this Jahweh God. Saul learned to adapt -- but he was never happy with the new ways, and when things really got tough, he looked to his old gods and went over to see the Witch of Endor to find out what the enemy had in store. That was where he and Jahweh God parted. Poor Saul. He was caught in a world he hardly understood! Everything was changing, nothing seemed to have a center. How he wished for the good old days, when the gods were secure, the military knew what they were doing, the country had the right kind of folk leading it, and people knew how to behave-- knew the rules. Saul was so confused, he hardly knew his own name any more. He was a real case of anomie. And eventually, he did what Durkheim postulated -- he committed suicide.

Can you see some parallels? Many people today feel that sense of anomie. The world has changed so rapidly that people are frightened. They want some sense of the past to hold on to. God, they pray, make it safe again, let me know what to expect! Many Christians are at that point. The world has changed so greatly that they are frightened. Nuclear energy, great social upheaval -- especially within the time of the baby boomers; new forms of government--like Communism and socialism -- scare them. The questioning of old beliefs and the arising of new ideas --all of these together are frightening for people who remember how simple it was when everybody knew what to expect. When the milk train stopped and the old time religion had meaning for everyone -- when everyone was American and your neighbor wasn't a Cambodian Buddhist, a Russian Jew, a Japanese Taoist and your son or daughter hadn't picked up some new religion like the Moonies. When sexuality and sex roles were simple -- men were men and women were girls, and nobody they knew was gay. People out there are scared. And they want the old time religion that had meaning and they want to go back to the time when everybody knew the rules. Well, it's that kind of time, and Jerry Falwell plays upon the fears of those people, and promises them "The Old Time Gospel Hour" and tells them who the enemy is (us), and they follow him, and he profits, and profits, and profits.

But maybe there's more to it than that. Durkheim was also talking about anomie being a condition for strangers and sojourners and for people in subcultures. Maybe there's something there for us, as well. Gay liberation has called us to come out -- it has asked us to change our ways and to trust God to help us find a way to be a new kind of gay people-- strong, and open, and fearless. And

WELCOME

SOOM AND DIGNITY TO BEGIN IN MOBILE

Efforts are being made to organize two new organizations for gay and Lesbian people in Mobile. According to John P., who is spearheading the drive, the Silver Owls of Mobile (SOOM) and a Dignity chapter are looking for persons interested in these groups.

SOOM is a social group for older people, usually over the age of 40, and for younger people who like to be with older gays and Lesbians.

Dignity is an organization for gay Catholics and their friends. The chapter will be part of the national organization that consists of over 117 chapters across the nation.

"Too often gay and Lesbian Catholics feel alienated from their church. Dignity has been successful in being a bridge for these people to rebuild a religious life. Also, Dignity has been effective in creating a dialogue with the church's hierarchy," said John P.

He noted that the SOOM organization is simply an attempt to bring people together in a social context. "Many older gays and Lesbians simply have no social place to go except the bars, where they are usually ignored by younger people. SOOM will be an attempt to provide a congenial group for dinner parties, theater and other outings.

Anyone interested in SOOM or Dignity is asked to contact John at 342-7891, or the HELPLINE at 476-9142.

FIRST NIGHTERS

People interested in going to theater: Involves joining Joe Jefferson Players ($25.00 for 6 plays/musicals) plus other theater presentations. Call HELPLINE for further information - 476-9142.

Club Park Ave
#7 S. Joachim St.
Mobile, AL 36602
(205) 433-1236
(205) 433-9195
JIM CRISS
General Manager

...from the pastor

maybe we, too, are like the Falwell followers. It was so secure in my closet. I was so comfortable hiding. I really don't need these new, frightening ideas of openness and liberation, do I? Oh, yes, you do. You need them for your mental health, you need them for your ability to be a whole person, you need them in a world of change, so that you can change with the world and not be stuck, as Saul was, in fear. Saul clung to the old gods, and could not trust Jahweh God -- and he lost. Most of us try the same thing. We stick to our old gods, our closetedness and our lies. God sees through us -- God knows who we are, and God loves us enough to invite us to be KING. Be all you can be, be the royal person God invites you to be. The alternative for far too many of us has been Saul's solution, suicide; the death of who we really are or can be. The gay community is growing up, and learning that in taking risks there is strength and growth. Don't be a Saul -- be a David. Take the risks -- and grow!

COMING OUT

I've often heard Rev. Marge quote her friend from Providence, Ray LaRiviere, who coined a phrase about gay attitudes, "As long as I can boogie, I'm free." A lot of us started out the same way. If it hadn't been for Gay/Lesbian bars, we would have had nothing. Work, a relationship, maybe -- and then party time at the bars. But heavens, don't ask me to meet your there before the sun went down.

We remain in our closets, doing nothing, hoping and sometimes even praying that no one ever discovers who we "really are." From birth, almost, we are conditioned that to be Gay/Lesbian is a fate worse than death. So we hide and we die a thousand deaths each day. And then one day something wakes us up and we come face to face with years of playing "straight" games. The roles we adopted are unbelievable and staggering, not to mention the toll oppression has taken on our lives.

Sane or insane? The medical world finally realized our sexual preferences had nothing to do with our sanity. Yet, many of our people have difficulty making it through life. Many suffer dependency problems -- sexual, drug, alcohol -- many are emotionally crippled by "oppression sickness." They really don't remain sane in world that tries to crush them.

To many of you out there, "coming out" would be insane. For many it would be. The greatest day of my life, however, was when I became insane. Oh, I'd already come out to some very selected "straight" friends, having carefully tested the waters before ever diving. Heck, they already knew who I was anyway.

Things started changing the day I walked into the new MCC. Sweat poured down my back, fear gripped every part of my body. I made myself sit in the second pew from the front, another bold move for me. I looked behind me, and came face to face with an older "straight couple." I muttered some weird excuse (to whom I still don't know) and got up to leave. But I didn't.

I made it through the daylight. I made it through the service in God's house. I was introduced to the older couple and lived. Last week at Bruno's I happened to notice my attire and chuckled to myself. My MCC teeshirt looked quite nice! A couple of people gave me knowing smiles, but most of the shoppers paid no attention to me. Most of them, if they knew what an MCC was wouldn't have cared anyway. Most of your professional associates, your families, your straight friends probably know who you are right now. Some may not want the confrontation of being told, but many would welcome your openness and applaud your courage and honesty.

For years, a small minority ran my life. Now I'm in charge. IT FEELS GOOD!!!

October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
UU WORSHIP 10:30 AM ev. every Sunday	NOVEMBER 1st ROCKY HORROR SHOW AT ESQUIRE WITH OSTRIS	1	2 RAP; Who's on Top-- Power in Relationships.	3		ER'S ANNIVERSARY
6 MCC WORSHIP 7:00 P.M. 5:30 New Memb	7	8	9 RAP: Peer Pressure - Handling your friends.	10	11	12 COLUMBUS DAY
13 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 3:00Shrimp Boil at DAVID'sII UU VOLLEYBALL	14 COLUMBUS DAY OBSERVED	15	16 RAP Cross-Generational Relationships	17	18 UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS 2-DAY WORKSHOP	19 "The Haunting Church"
20 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 5:30 New Memb	21	22	23 RAP HOLDING HANDS Making a political statement.	24	25	26
27 MCC WORSHIP-7pm UU VOLLEYBALL 5:30 New Memb MOTHER-IN-LAW DAY	28	29	30 RAP HOMOPHOBIA -- THEIRS AND OURS	31 HOOKER'S BALL ALL THE BARS HALLOWEEN		

CLASSIFIED ADS

Weekend Sketch Group -- interested? Call the HELPLINE for information.

WRITERS GROUP -- Meet once a month for social contact and constructive criticism of members' work. Bring a piece of writing for criticism, and ke p a log of the number of hours spent wri ting. Contact Shirley L. at the HELPLINE.

BIKERS (no, silly, not that kind!) are being sought for a bike riding group. Ride, bring lunch and picnic-- weather will be perfect soon.

Halloween

FOR SALE: SCM Electric Typewriter, ribbon spool. Best offer. Evenings 8-10. 342-7891, ask for John.

PLUMBING - Indoors, reasonable rates. Expert service. Call evenings after 6, or Mondays, 476-5171, as for Harry.

CLEANING-INTERIOR PAINTING, WALLPAPER. Organize your precious collectibles?? Excellent references in both communities. 476-9142, ask for Shirley.

BOWLING LEAGUE -- Members of MCC want to form a bowling team to hopefully compete against other gay groups (bars, etc.). At least six teams are needed. Call the HELPLINE if you are interested.

SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.
433-9141

SUN. - THURS. 10 A. M. - 2 A.M.
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS

ESQUIRE
BAR & LOUNGE

- Phone 433-9175 -
Mon.-Fri. 9:30 a.m. Till
Sat. 9:30 a.m.-2a.m.
13 South Joachim St. Mobile, Ala.

The Metropolitan Community Church
AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD — MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA, Pastor — (205) 476-9142

Volume 1, No. 2 — October 1985

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART...

The veil of distaste and misconceptions surrounding the gay segment of the population is nowhere better illustrated than in the film, "God, Gays and the Gospel," a no-nonsense look at the rapid rise of the Metropolitan Community Church.

One of the most poignant plights of gay people in today's world is the denial of their right to worship by most of the traditional organized religions. Almost without exception the Christian faith has taken upon itself the right to refuse gays a part in the Family of God.

The long struggle by MCC founder Rev. Troy Perry to establish a faith, not just for gays but for anyone, is the focus of the film. In concise, to the point terms, the production addresses the sheer magnitude of the work being done and the forward strides being made by Perry and his legion of pastors and congregations.

Since its founding in 1969, MCC has endured everything from ridicule to bombings to burned-out church sanctuaries. More than 17 years later, Perry and his followers have forged a recognized, respected faith wherein all are welcomed. It is a tribute to the ecumenical and accepting nature of this church that 20 per cent of its members are non-gay. It is a true illustration of the overused, misused term, "real Christian people."

Perry, a transplanted Floridian, excluded from the church of his childhood, spent years berating himself as "unacceptable." In the end, he determined that there is no reason -- save for human bigotry and Biblical misinterpretation -- for gays to be denied a right to their faith. Nowhere in the Bible, he points out, is there condemnation of homosexuality as it is understood today. In one of his most moving sermons, he presents a stunning point: "If AIDS is God's "gift" to the homosexual, then is toxic shock syndrome God's "gift" to women for being female? ...or is Legionnaires' Disease God's "gift" to the American Legion for being too patriotic?

From the perspective of a "straight," the message of "God, Gays, and the Gospel" is very much to the point: No human deserves the right to tell another he or she will never be acceptable in the eyes of God. Moreover, it should be remembered that Perry et al are not working for immediate and total social acceptance, but for establishment of a climate of cooperation and understanding.

No "straight" who professes a concern for human rights should let gays bear this struggle alone.

(Note: N.J.Green is MCC at Mobile's "token straight," our assistant organist. Thank God for our "straight" friends.)

REMINDER

MCC MEMBERS-ATTENTION!

Congregational Meeting, October 27, following worship service. Election of officers, other important business, including coming into agreement with GSS changes.

FROM THE EDITOR--

Our first issue was a roaring success, so the community tells us. We personally wish to thank the bar owners and managers for making the newsletter a reality, rather than the "dream" so many of us have talked about for the last couple of years. At last we have a way to communicate ideas among gays in Mobile. We also want to apologize to Chuck at Troopers for omitting a news item last month. Thanks for bearing with us and our mistakes -- we'll get it right with practice. A word of thanks to all of you out there from the small group at MCC. Because of you the newsletter will continue to grow, to increase our awareness and to solidify the community.

To date we have received the names "Revelations," "Mobile Pride News," and "Genesis." Don't be bashful. Send or call in your suggestion.

We stated our purpose last month, "to offer a news source for the entire community." We are happy to report that this issue, our second, has accomplished that goal. Sincere applause to each organization and business for your participation. We are open to your suggestions and your criticism. Our new feature, "Community Profile" has already been designated for the November issue. Send in the name of someone you wish to acknowledge in a future issue.

Our editorial policy requires that a name and address be submitted along with newscopy. Your name and address will not be printed without your written consent, but we must have this information to protect the legal position of the church. Please drop editorial copy or editorial replies at the church or mail them to: MCC Newsletter, P.O. Box 8524, Mobile, Ala. 36608. The deadline for all copy is the Third Monday of the Month.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

NEWS FROM THE LESBIAN TASK FORCE OF NOW

Two important pieces of legislation are going to be brought to Congress in this year, NOW has informed us. One, is H.R. 230, the Federal Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights Legislation which is spearheaded by Representative Ted Weiss of Brooklyn, N.Y. and carries the endorsement of 44 other representatives, including Rep. Gerry Studds of Massachusetts, an openly gay legislator. The bill primarily calls for the insertion of the words, "affexional or sexual orientation," throughout the Civil Rights Act of 1964, following the word "color," and in other legislation, like the Equal opportunity Act, where it is inserted after "sex." thus identifying gay and Lesbian discrimination as equal to that against people of color and as pervasive as sexism. Interestingly, the same act speaks against acts of intimidation or violence against gays and Lesbians in the same passage that it speaks about violence against religious groups.

The other piece of legislation is the now infamous McCarran-Walter act, which prohibits certain people from entering the United States because of political or sexual orientation. Farley Mowat, the Canadian author of such dangerous books as the environmental study, "Never Cry Wolf," and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Colombia's Nobel Prize Winning novelist, were both excluded -- and refused to be singled out as special cases -- under this Act. Gay men and women can be refused entry into the U.S. -- and have been -- by the terms of the McCarran Act. It is important for the McCarran Act to not include gays and Lesbians under the heading of those accused of "moral turpitude."

The legislation above is entitled Immigration Exclusion and Deportation Amendments of 1985. The first is HR 230. Your congressional representative will vote on both of these. Make your wishes known. One letter -- one letter -- can make the difference, because very few letters on any subject are received from constituents, and as many as five or six letters can seem like an avalanche. If you are interested in how to write to Congress, call the HELPLINE for a copy of MCC's booklet, Writing to Congress, from MCC's Department of Christian Social Action.

Bulletin Board

ORDER OF OSIRIS - "The Rocky Horror Show" Friday and Saturday, November 1 and 2, Presented by the Order of Osiris and the Esquire House -- at the Esquire House. $5.00 admission. See an Osiris member or your bartender for tickets.

Less than 140 days to Osiris' 5th Anniversary Mardi Gras Ball, February 7, 1986.

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - Study series for 4 weeks on Men's Life and Men's Issues. Call the UU's at 342-6834 for information and starting date (near the end of the month.)

2-day Workshop -- The Haunting Church October 18 and 19 at the UU Fellowship 6345 Old Shell Road.

Volleyball -- every 2nd and 4th Sunday, at 2 P.M. at the UU's, weather permitting.

better gay than grumpy

TROOPERS - Shuffleboard tournaments every Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. Pool tournaments every Thursday at 8:30. Some of the best popcorn in Mobile.

CORRAL - Pool tournament every Monday at 9:00 p.m. Please watch for announcements of upcoming Halloween events.

CPA - Costume contest at midnight in conjunction with Hooker's Ball.

Free buffet every Sunday at 9:30 p.m.

Watch for "Name that Tune" to begin early NOvember on Sunday evenings.

DAVID'S II - Special Guest, Halloween Eve through Saturday, Carmen Del Rio.

First Sunday of October begins David's free buffet from 3-9 p.m., and the Tea Dance.

Shrimp boil, Sunday October 13th, from 3 til? To help raise funds for MCC's HELPLINE and newsletter. $3.00 cover, includes all the boiled shrimp you can eat, along with other goodies.

ESQUIRE - Rocky Horror Show November 1 and 2 at 9:30 p.m. Get your tickets from Esquire or any Osiris member. $5.00 per ticket.

PROFILE

Did you enjoy Mobile's Gay Pride 85? Our first profile is, Harry, organizer and leader of Pride 85. Harry was the catalyst that brought together the various elements of the community. It wasn't his first time out, certainly not his first effort for our benefit. Fifteen years in the Mobile area has seen Harry speaking at the University of South Alabama and Springhill College on Gay/Lesbian issues. He was one of the strong leaders of the old Gulf Alliance for Equality as well.

When Harry isn't working on our behalf, he enjoys meeting the public in his retail profession. While there's still daylight after a hard day at work, you might see him out bicycling or running, or on Sundays offering his talents at the Unitarian-Universalists' worship and fellowship. "My religion," Harry said, has given me a lot more direction in my life, and a greater sense of freedom to allow my own beliefs to evolve."

Harry offered the following thoughts about and reflections on Gay Pride'85: '85 was very successfull considering the late starting date for planning. '84, our first Gay Pride Activity, made '85 much easier to put together. Adding more organizations -- the UU's and MCC -- added much to '85's success. Without Danni B. '85 would not have come toether. A SPECIAL THANKS TO HER.

For 1986 Gay Pride, Harry foresees greatness. "For once, we are starting off with some money, $186.00, thanks to the bars. We will begin planning at a much earlier date, offering the same type of activities, with more variety, however. We will certainly push for more publicity and participation from all the organizations. We want Gay Pride to be financially self-supporting, and there's no reason it shouldn't be if we all work at it."

When asked what he would change if given the right opportunity, Harry offered the following: "I'd like to see more open Gay/Lesbian businesses, organizations, and individuals come out, and a greater media presence for the community. However, the fear of coming out is still our greatest obstacle. Most of us, including me, still face job discrimination, neighborhood harassment, and the possible loss of our families or their strong disapproval."

In a larger context, Harry went on, "Much of our recent publicity has been derogatory. I feel that the Moral Majority uses us as their biggest fundraiser, particularly now that AIDS has come to the forefront of the news media."

Harry is one of the strongest and most open figures in our Mobile Gay Community, and with his support and leadership, gay Mobile should reach the goals which he is helping us set.

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We all know that safer sex can reduce the risk of contracting and spreading AIDS. Some practices are more effective than others; some we have questions about.

We all need to make informed decisions, not excuses. You'll probably agree that none of the following excuses justify the pread of AIDS in our community:

"WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And it's the community's. Everyone must take a concerned and active role if we're going to stop the spread of this disease.

Here's another common excuse: "If someone doesn't ask me to practice safer sex, I figure that's his decision and I respect it."

Why? Aren't you concerned? Perhaps your partner is just as uncomfortable in raising the issue as you are.

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Making decisions about sexual practices is difficult. Sticking to those decisions is even more difficult. But this isn't a moral issue; it's a matter of life and death.

"CHANGING MY SEX LIFE ISN"T A CURE FOR AIDS."

That's true. There is no cure or vaccine. And researchers think they are years away from developing one. Safer sexual practices are our best means right now of reducing our risk and stopping the spread of AIDS.

"CHANGE? NOBODY ELSE IS DOING IT!"

The fact is that a major research project conducted by the AIDS Foundation among San Francisco Gaymen revealed that two-thirds of the Gay community is making a serious effort to reduce their risk by practicing safer sex. Two-thirds!

Talk about it. Even though its a difficult subject for everyone, chances are your partner is just as concerned as you are and would probably welcome a chance to discuss it.

Let's stop making excuses. Let's stop the spread of AIDS.

Reprinted from ACTS 29, Newsletter of [illegible]

Rectal gonorrhea has declined 86% since the AIDS scare -- people are aware of risks and are changing their sexual habits. Safe sex works.

Bulletin Board

HOOKER'S BALL - HALLOWEEN NIGHT -- Presented by all your favorite bars and the Order of Osiris. Prizes for costumes, all bars are involved, begins 7:00 p.m. Hallowe'en night, costumes are invited, and you are especially requested to attend this celebration of what is turning into the second most exciting activity of the year.

Birthdays

HAPPY BIRTHDAY - Queen Richard, Oct.9, from all the folks at Esquire House.

Label JARS Not PEOPLE

ANNIVERSARY

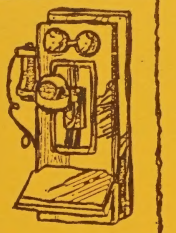
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY - Oct. 5 to Chuck at Troopers on their 2nd Year of fun and support of the community.

HAPPY BELATED ANNIVERSARY TO CPA - We were not notified in time for publication last month, but CPA celebrated their 2nd anniversary on Sept. 27th. Great going, guys!

476-9142

Gay

Help-line



We met at

DAVID'S II

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985

from the fellowship

"FREE TO BE"

12TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF MCC

Sacramento, California. The conference got off to an exciting start. Rev. Elders Freda Smith and Nancy Wilson both preached Monday. I especially enjoyed hearing them. The film, "God, Gays, and the Gospel" was also shown for the first time on Monday.

The film, a documentary telling about MCC and what it means, cost about $100,000 to make. Many unique aspects of MCC were brought out. The fact that MCC has membrers from every religious background and the highest proportion of women ministers were particularly interesting.

In the business meetings, a great deal was accomplished in the first few days. The Government Structures and Systems proposal was accepted with some minor amendments. Two changes will have the most immediate impact. One is the adoption of the General Council as the governing body of MCC. The General Council will be composed of the Board of Directors and the District Coordinators, thus giving total regional representation at the highest MCC level. The other change is that there will be only commissioned and chartered churches (instead of the three tier system as previously: Study group, mission, chartered church.). At the conference I was an official observer, with a voice, but without vote. In the future, all delegates will have a vote. Each delegate will represent one hundred members or a portion of 100 if the church is smaller. This means that even the smallest church will have a voting delegate.

All of the elders standing for re-election were elected.

I had an opportunity to sing in the Conference Choir, and attended several workshops, including the Sexuality and Spirituality and Spiritual Gifts workshop.

R.P., Delegate

Check it Out

MCC is the largest Gay/Lesbian organization in the world.

NOW (Nat'l Organization for Women) offers insurance for "significant others" (not just physicians, but alternative medicine as well).

Jerry Falwell and his "Moral Majority" are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars across the country to stop Gay/Lesbian rights.

A local printer refused to print our first newsletter because of its content.

A local bank refused to open a joint bank account for a well-known Gay couple.

The Unitarian-Universalist Association openly supports Gay/Lesbian rights.

Mobile Mental Health has actively trained and offers continued support for the Gay Helpline volunteers.

The Gay Helpline is in operation every night from 6 p.m. to midnight for anyone needing someone to talk to -- check it out.

The local bar owners and managers -- Chuck, Miss Betty, Jim, John, Grace and David -- make the printing and mailing of this newsletter possible.

The bar owners and managers donated money and supplies for the kick-off party to celebrate the opening of the Helpline, and that we will be raising funds for the Helpline from time to time, due to their generosity.

...from the pastor

SAUL AND ANOMIE

In the late 1800's, the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, coined the word ANOMIE (without a name) to explain the psychological state of strangers, people at the edge of social movements with enormous change, and people who belonged to subcultures where they were unsure of what the social expectations were within a dominant group. They felt, as James Baldwin must have, like "nobody knows my name." As a matter of fact, in a true state of anomie, it's more like "I don't even know my own name." Durkheim postulated that when a society is experiencing great anomie, the suicide rate goes up. When I read of Saul, the first king of Israel in the Bible, I realized that even in Biblical times, people knew the concept of anomie, even though they didn't know the word.

Saul lived in an anomic time. He was a soldier who had been trained in the old skills of warfare before iron was invented. Suddenly, there was iron. And iron was so strong that all the weapons he had been taught to use were nearly useless. So he learned to use iron, but he was never comfortable with it. Then the people of his area learned about a new God, and all the things he was used to in the old gods were outdated. To add to his problems, Jahweh decided Saul should be king of Israel. Saul wasn't from a royal family (there weren't any royal families in Israel -- he was the first) and he didn't know how a king behaved, he'd never even had a king. But Jahweh had selected him to be king. And still worse, his son gets friendly with this David fellow -- and he knows there's something strange there -- but can that fellow play the harp! He wasn't even permitted to ask the seer what was going to happen, and feel secure, he had to trust this Jahweh God. Saul learned to adapt -- but he was never happy with the new ways, and when things really got tough, he looked to his old gods and went over to see the Witch of Endor to find out what the enemy had in store. That was where he and Jahweh God parted. Poor Saul. He was caught in a world he hardly understood! Everything was changing, nothing seemed to have a center. How he wished for the good old days, when the gods were secure, the military knew what they were doing, the country had the right kind of folk leading it, and people knew how to behave-- knew the rules. Saul was so confused, he hardly knew his own name any more. He was a real case of anomie. And eventually, he did what Durkheim postulated -- he committed suicide.

Can you see some parallels? Many people today feel that sense of anomie. The world has changed so rapidly that people are frightened. They want some sense of the past to hold on to. God, they pray, make it safe again, let me know what to expect! Many Christians are at that point. The world has changed so greatly that they are frightened. Nuclear energy, great social upheaval -- especially within the time of the baby boomers; new forms of government--like Communism and socialism -- scare them. The questioning of old beliefs and the arising of new ideas --all of these together are frightening for people who remember how simple it was when everybody knew what to expect. When the milk train stopped and the old time religion had meaning for everyone -- when everyone was American and your neighbor wasn't a Cambodian Buddhist, a Russian Jew, a Japanese Taoist and your son or daughter hadn't picked up some new religion like the Moonies. When sexuality and sex roles were simple -- men were men and women were girls, and nobody they knew was gay. People out there are scared. And they want the old time religion that had meaning and they want to go back to the time when everybody knew the rules. Well, it's that kind of time, and Jerry Falwell plays upon the fears of those people, and promises them "The Old Time Gospel Hour" and tells them who the enemy is (us), and they follow him, and he profits, and profits, and profits.

But maybe there's more to it than that. Durkheim was also talking about anomie being a condition for strangers and sojourners and for people in subcultures. Maybe there's something there for us, as well. Gay liberation has called us to come out -- it has asked us to change our ways and to trust God to help us find a way to be a new kind of gay people-- strong, and open, and fearless. And

WELCOME

SOOM AND DIGNITY TO BEGIN IN MOBILE

Efforts are being made to organize two new organizations for gay and Lesbian people in Mobile. According to John P., who is spearheading the drive, the Silver Owls of Mobile (SOOM) and a Dignity chapter are looking for persons interested in these groups.

SOOM is a social group for older people, usually over the age of 40, and for younger people who like to be with older gays and Lesbians.

Dignity is an organization for gay Catholics and their friends. The chapter will be part of the national organization that consists of over 117 chapters across the nation.

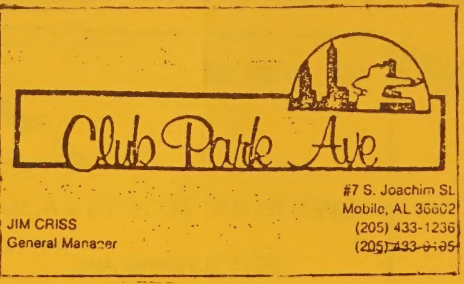
"Too often gay and Lesbian Catholics feel alienated from their church. Dignity has been successful in being a bridge for these people to rebuild a religious life. Also, Dignity has been effective in creating a dialogue with the church's hierarchy," said John P.

He noted that the SOOM organization is simply an attempt to bring people together in a social context. "Many older gays and Lesbians simply have no social place to go except the bars, where they are usually ignored by younger people. SOOM will be an attempt to provide a congenial group for dinner parties, theater and other outings.

Anyone interested in SOOM or Dignity is asked to contact John at 342-7891, or the HELPLINE at 476-9142.

FIRST NIGHTERS

People interested in going to theater: Involves joining Joe Jefferson Players ($25.00 for 6 plays/musicals) plus other theater presentations. Call HELPLINE for further information - 476-9142.



...from the pastor

maybe we, too, are like the Falwell followers. It was so secure in my closet. I was so comfortable hiding. I really don't need these new, frightening ideas of openness and liberation, do I? Oh, yes, you do. You need them for your mental health, you need them for your ability to be a whole person, you need them in a world of change, so that you can change with the world and not be stuck, as Saul was, in fear. Saul clung to the old gods, and could not trust Jahweh God -- and he lost. Most of us try the same thing. We stick to our old gods, our closetedness and our lies. God sees through us -- God knows who we are, and God loves us enough to invite us to be KING. Be all you can be, be the royal person God invites you to be. The alternative for far too many of us has been Saul's solution, suicide; the death of who we really are or can be. The gay community is growing up, and learning that in taking risks there is strength and growth. Don't be a Saul -- be a David. Take the risks -- and grow!

COMING OUT

I've often heard Rev. Marge quote her friend from Providence, Ray LaRiviere, who coined a phrase about gay attitudes, "As long as I can boogie, I'm free." A lot of us started out the same way. If it hadn't been for Gay/Lesbian bars, we would have had nothing. Work, a relationship, maybe -- and then party time at the bars. But heavens, don't ask me to meet your there before the sun went down.

We remain in our closets, doing nothing, hoping and sometimes even praying that no one ever discovers who we "really are." From birth, almost, we are conditioned that to be Gay/Lesbian is a fate worse than death. So we hide and we die a thousand deaths each day. And then one day something wakes us up and we come face to face with years of playing "straight" games. The roles we adopted are unbelievable and staggering, not to mention the toll oppression has taken on our lives.

Sane or insane? The medical world finally realized our sexual preferences had nothing to do with our sanity. Yet, many of our people have difficulty making it through life. Many suffer dependency problems -- sexual, drug, alcohol -- many are emotionally crippled by "oppression sickness." They really don't remain sane in world that tries to crush them.

To many of you out there, "coming out" would be insane. For many it would be. The greatest day of my life, however, was when I became insane. Oh, I'd already come out to some very selected "straight" friends, having carefully tested the waters before ever diving. Heck, they already knew who I was anyway.

Things started changing the day I walked into the new MCC. Sweat poured down my back, fear gripped every part of my body. I made myself sit in the second pew from the front, another bold move for me. I looked behind me, and came face to face with an older "straight couple." I muttered some weird excuse (to whom I still don't know) and got up to leave. But I didn't.

I made it through the daylight. I made it through the service in God's house. I was introduced to the older couple and lived. Last week at Bruno's I happened to notice my attire and chuckled to myself. My MCC teeshirt looked quite nice! A couple of people gave me knowing smiles, but most of the shoppers paid no attention to me. Most of them, if they knew what an MCC was wouldn't have cared anyway. Most of your professional associates, your families, your straight friends probably know who you are right now. Some may not want the confrontation of being told, but many would welcome your openness and applaud your courage and honesty.

For years, a small minority ran my life. Now I'm in charge. IT FEELS GOOD!!!

October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
UU WORSHIP 10:30 AM ev. every Sunday	MOTHER'S DAY ROCKY HORROR SHOW AT ESQUIRE WITH OSTRIS	1	2 RAP; Who's on Top-- Power in Relationships.	3		FATHER'S ANNIVERSARY
6 MCC WORSHIP 7:00 P.M. 5:30 New Memb.	7	8	9 RAP: Peer Pressure - Handling your friends.	10	11	12 COLUMBUS DAY
13 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 3:00Shrimp Boil at DAVID'S!! UU VOLLEYBALL	14 COLUMBUS DAY OBSERVED	15	16 RAP Cross-Generational Relationships	17	18 UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS 2-DAY WORKSHOP	19 "The Haunting Church"
20 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 5:30 New Memb	21	22	23 RAP HOLDING HANDS Making a political statement.	24	25	26
27 MCC WORSHIP-7pm UU VOLLEYBALL 5:30 New Memb MOTHER-IN-LAW DAY	28	29	30 RAP HOMOPHOBIA -- THEIRS AND OURS	31 HOOKER'S BALL ALL THE BARS HALLOWEEN		

CLASSIFIED ADS

Weekend Sketch Group -- interested? Call the HELPLINE for information.

WRITERS GROUP -- Meet once a month for social contact and constructive criticism of members' work. Bring a piece of writing for criticism, and ke p a log of the number of hours spent wri ting. Contact Shirley L. at the HELPLINE.

BIKERS (no, silly, not that kind!) are being sought for a bike riding group. Ride, bring lunch and picnic-- weather will be perfect soon.

Halloween

FOR SALE: SCM Electric Typewriter, ribbon spool. Best offer. Evenings 8-10. 342-7891, ask for John.

PLUMBING - Indoors, reasonable rates. Expert service. Call evenings after 6, or Mondays, 476-5171, as for Harry.

CLEANING-INTERIOR PAINTING, WALLPAPER. Organize your precious collectibles?? Excellent references in both communities. 476-9142, ask for Shirley.

BOWLING LEAGUE -- Members of MCC want to form a bowling team to hopefully compete against other gay groups (bars, etc.). At least six teams are needed. Call the HELPLINE if you are interested.

SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.
433-9141

SUN. - THURS. 10 A. M. - 2 A.M.
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS

ESQUIRE
BAR & LOUNGE

- Phone 433-9175 -
Mon.-Fri. 9:30 a.m. Till
Sat. 9:30 a.m.-2a.m.
13 South Joachim St. Mobile, Ala.

The Metropolitan Community Church
AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD — MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA
Pastor — (205) 476-9142

Volume 1, No. 2 — October 1985

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART...

The veil of distaste and misconceptions surrounding the gay segment of the population is nowhere better illustrated than in the film, "God, Gays and the Gospel," a no-nonsense look at the rapid rise of the Metropolitan Community Church.

One of the most poignant plights of gay people in today's world is the denial of their right to worship by most of the traditional organized religions. Almost without exception the Christian faith has taken upon itself the right to refuse gays a part in the Family of God.

The long struggle by MCC founder Rev. Troy Perry to establish a faith, not just for gays but for anyone, is the focus of the film. In concise, to the point terms, the production addresses the sheer magnitude of the work being done and the forward strides being made by Perry and his legion of pastors and congregations.

Since its founding in 1969, MCC has endured everything from ridicule to bombings to burned-out church sanctuaries. More than 17 years later, Perry and his followers have forged a recognized, respected faith wherein all are welcomed. It is a tribute to the ecumenical and accepting nature of this church that 20 per cent of its members are non-gay. It is a true illustration of the overused, misused term, "real Christian people."

Perry, a transplanted Floridian, excluded from the church of his childhood, spent years berating himself as "unacceptable." In the end, he determined that there is no reason -- save for human bigotry and Biblical misinterpretation -- for gays to be denied a right to their faith. Nowhere in the Bible, he points out, is there condemnation of homosexuality as it is understood today. In one of his most moving sermons, he presents a stunning point: "If AIDS is God's "gift" to the homosexual, then is toxic shock syndrome God's "gift" to women for being female? ...or is Legionnaires' Disease God's "gift" to the American Legion for being too patriotic?

From the perspective of a "straight," the message of "God, Gays, and the Gospel" is very much to the point: No human deserves the right to tell another he or she will never be acceptable in the eyes of God. Moreover, it should be remembered that Perry et al are not working for immediate and total social acceptance, but for establishment of a climate of cooperation and understanding.

No "straight" who professes a concern for human rights should let gays bear this struggle alone.

(Note: N.J.Green is MCC at Mobile's "token straight," our assistant organist. Thank God for our "straight" friends.)

REMINDER

MCC MEMBERS-ATTENTION!
Congregational Meeting, October 27, following worship service. Election of officers, other important business, including coming into agreement with GSS changes.

FROM THE EDITOR--

Our first issue was a roaring success, so the community tells us. We personally wish to thank the bar owners and managers for making the newsletter a reality, rather than the "dream" so many of us have talked about for the last couple of years. At last we have a way to communicate ideas among gays in Mobile. We also want to apologize to Chuck at Troopers for omitting a news item last month. Thanks for bearing with us and our mistakes -- we'll get it right with practice. A word of thanks to all of you out there from the small group at MCC. Because of you the newsletter will continue to grow, to increase our awareness and to solidify the community.

To date we have received the names "Revelations," "Mobile Pride News," and "Genesis." Don't be bashful. Send or call in your suggestion.

We stated our purpose last month, "to offer a news source for the entire community." We are happy to report that this issue, our second, has accomplished that goal. Sincere applause to each organization and business for your participation. We are open to your suggestions and your criticism. Our new feature. "Community Profile" has already been designated for the November issue. Send in the name of someone you wish to acknowledge in a future issue.

Our editorial policy requires that a name and address be submitted along with newscopy. Your name and address will not be printed without your written consent, but we must have this information to protect the legal position of the church. Please drop editorial copy or editorial replies at the church or mail them to: MCC Newsletter, P.O. Box 8524, Mobile, Ala. 36608. The deadline for all copy is the Third Monday of the Month.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

NEWS FROM THE LESBIAN TASK FORCE OF NOW

Two important pieces of legislation are going to be brought to Congress in this year, NOW has informed us. One, is H.R. 230, the Federal Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights Legislation which is spearheaded by Representative Ted Weiss of Brooklyn, N.Y. and carries the endorsement of 44 other representatives, including Rep. Gerry Studds of Massachusetts, an openly gay legislator. The bill primarily calls for the insertion of the words, "affexional or sexual orientation," throughout the Civil Rights Act of 1964, following the word "color," and in other legislation, like the Equal opportunity Act, where it is inserted after "sex." thus identifying gay and Lesbian discrimination as equal to that against people of color and as pervasive as sexism. Interestingly, the same act speaks against acts of intimidation or violence against gays and Lesbians in the same passage that it speaks about violence against religious groups.

The other piece of legislation is the now infamous McCarran-Walter act, which prohibits certain people from entering the United States because of political or sexual orientation. Farley Mowat, the Canadian author of such dangerous books as the environmental study, "Never Cry Wolf," and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Colombia's Nobel Prize Winning novelist, were both excluded -- and refused to be singled out as special cases -- under this Act. Gay men and women can be refused entry into the U.S. -- and have been -- by the terms of the McCarran Act. It is important for the McCarran Act to not include gays and Lesbians under the heading of those accused of "moral turpitude."

The legislation above is entitled Immigration Exclusion and Deportation Amendments of 1985. The first is HR 230. Your congressional representative will vote on both of these. Make your wishes known. One letter -- one letter -- can make the difference, because very few letters on any subject are received from constituents, and as many as five or six letters can seem like an avalanche. If you are interested in how to write to Congress, call the HELPLINE for a copy of MCC's booklet, Writing to Congress, from MCC's Department of Christian Social Action.

Bulletin Board

ORDER OF OSIRIS - "The Rocky Horror Show" Friday and Saturday, November 1 and 2, Presented by the Order of Osiris and the Esquire House -- at the Esquire House. $5.00 admission. See an Osiris member or your bartender for tickets.

Less than 140 days to Osiris' 5th Anniversary Mardi Gras Ball, February 7, 1986.

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - Study series for 4 weeks on Men's Life and Men's Issues. Call the UU's at 342-6834 for information and starting date (near the end of the month.)

2-day Workshop -- The Haunting Church October 18 and 19 at the UU Fellowship 6345 Old Shell Road.

Volleyball -- every 2nd and 4th Sunday, at 2 P.M. at the UU's, weather permitting.

better gay than grumpy

TROOPERS - Shuffleboard tournaments every Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. Pool tournaments every Thursday at 8:30. Some of the best popcorn in Mobile.

CORRAL - Pool tournament every Monday at 9:00 p.m. Please watch for announcements of upcoming Halloween events.

CPA - Costume contest at midnight in conjunction with Hooker's Ball.

Free buffet every Sunday at 9:30 p.m.

Watch for "Name that Tune" to begin early NOvember on Sunday evenings.

DAVID'S II - Special Guest, Halloween Eve through Saturday, Carmen Del Rio.

First Sunday of October begins David's free buffet from 3-9 p.m., and the Tea Dance.

Shrimp boil, Sunday October 13th, from 3 til? To help raise funds for MCC's HELPLINE and newsletter. $3.00 cover, includes all the boiled shrimp you can eat, along with other goodies.

ESQUIRE - Rocky Horror Show November 1 and 2 at 9:30 p.m. Get your tickets from Esquire or any Osiris member. $5.00 per ticket.

PROFILE

Did you enjoy Mobile's Gay Pride 85? Our first profile is, Harry, organizer and leader of Pride 85. Harry was the catalyst that brought together the various elements of the community. It wasn't his first time out, certainly not his first effort for our benefit. Fifteen years in the Mobile area has seen Harry speaking at the University of South Alabama and Springhill College on Gay/Lesbian issues. He was one of the strong leaders of the old Gulf Alliance for Equality as well.

When Harry isn't working on our behalf, he enjoys meeting the public in his retail profession. While there's still daylight after a hard day at work, you might see him out bicycling or running, or on Sundays offering his talents at the Unitarian-Universalists' worship and fellowship. "My religion," Harry said, has given me a lot more direction in my life, and a greater sense of freedom to allow my own beliefs to evolve."

Harry offered the following thoughts about and reflections on Gay Pride'85: '85 was very successfull considering the late starting date for planning. '84, our first Gay Pride Activity, made '85 much easier to put together. Adding more organizations -- the UU's and MCC -- added much to '85's success. Without Danni B. '85 would not have come toether. A SPECIAL THANKS TO HER.

For 1986 Gay Pride, Harry foresees greatness. "For once, we are starting off with some money, $186.00, thanks to the bars. We will begin planning at a much earlier date, offering the same type of activities, with more variety, however. We will certainly push for more publicity and participation from all the organizations. We want Gay Pride to be financially self-supporting, and there's no reason it shouldn't be if we all work at it."

When asked what he would change if given the right opportunity, Harry offered the following: "I'd like to see more open Gay/Lesbian businesses, organizations, and individuals come out, and a greater media presence for the community. However, the fear of coming out is still our greatest obstacle. Most of us, including me, still face job discrimination, neighborhood harassment, and the possible loss of our families or their strong disapproval."

In a larger context, Harry went on, "Much of our recent publicity has been derogatory. I feel that the Moral Majority uses us as their biggest fundraiser, particularly now that AIDS has come to the forefront of the news media."

Harry is one of the strongest and most open figures in our Mobile Gay Community, and with his support and leadership, gay Mobile should reach the goals which he is helping us set.

SOCIETY LOUNGE -- Beginning in October, the first weekend each month, Miss Betty will be presenting weekend shows at 10 and 12 midnight. No cover.

SOMETHING TO SELL, SERVICE TO OFFER?? Call 476-9142 for rates and deadlines. Please NO PERSONALS, except Birthday, Anniversary, Thank You's.

TROOPERS
215 Conti Street
438-9139
HOURS: 11 a.m.-3 a.m.

CORRAL
54 So. Conception
433-9258
Weekdays - Noon Till
Weekends - 24 hours

THERE IS NO LONGER AN EXCUSE FOR SPREADING AIDS

Right now in the gay community, we're faced with some extremely difficult decisions because of AIDS -- sexual decisions affecting our lives and life-styles. We Gaymen have come up with a lot of excuses for avoiding the issue.

We all know that safer sex can reduce the risk of contracting and spreading AIDS. Some practices are more effective than others; some we have questions about.

We all need to make informed decisions, not excuses. You'll probably agree that none of the following excuses justify the pread of AIDS in our community:

"WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And it's the community's. Everyone must take a concerned and active role if we're going to stop the spread of this disease.

Here's another common excuse: "If someone doesn't ask me to practice safer sex, I figure that's his decision and I respect it."

Why? Aren't you concerned? Perhaps your partner is just as uncomfortable in raising the issue as you are.

"WHOSE LIFE IS IT, ANYWAY?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And the community's. The excuse, "It's my life," is only partly true. The life of your partner and the well-being of the community are also at stake.

AIDS is not just a physical problem. There are political, social, and economic effects as well. There is already evidence that social freedoms may be restricted because of AIDS. AIDS can be used as an excuse for anti-Gay action and legislation.

Making decisions about sexual practices is difficult. Sticking to those decisions is even more difficult. But this isn't a moral issue; it's a matter of life and death.

"CHANGING MY SEX LIFE ISN"T A CURE FOR AIDS."

That's true. There is no cure or vaccine. And researchers think they are years away from developing one. Safer sexual practices are our best means right now of reducing our risk and stopping the spread of AIDS.

"CHANGE? NOBODY ELSE IS DOING IT!"

The fact is that a major research project conducted by the AIDS Foundation among San Francisco Gaymen revealed that two-thirds of the Gay community is making a serious effort to reduce their risk by practicing safer sex. Two-thirds!

Talk about it. Even though its a difficult subject for everyone, chances are your partner is just as concerned as you are and would probably welcome a chance to discuss it.

Let's stop making excuses. Let's stop the spread of AIDS.

Reprinted from ACTS 29, Newsletter of [illegible]

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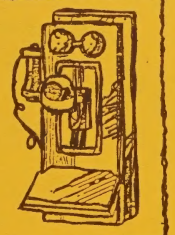

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In the business meetings, a great deal was accomplished in the first few days. The Government Structures and Systems proposal was accepted with some minor amendments. Two changes will have the most immediate impact. One is the adoption of the General Council as the governing body of MCC. The General Council will be composed of the Board of Directors and the District Coordinators, thus giving total regional representation at the highest MCC level. The other change is that there will be only commissioned and chartered churches (instead of the three tier system as previously: Study group, mission, chartered church.). At the conference I was an official observer, with a voice, but without vote. In the future, all delegates will have a vote. Each delegate will represent one hundred members or a portion of 100 if the church is smaller. This means that even the smallest church will have a voting delegate.

All of che elders standing for re-election were elected.

I had an opportunity to sing in the Conference Choir, and attended several workshops, including the Sexuality and Spirituality and Spiritual Gifts workshop.

R.P., Delegate

Check it Out

MCC is the largest Gay/Lesbian organization in the world.

NOW (Nat'l Organization for Women) offers insurance for "significant others" (not just physicians, but alternative medicine as well).

Jerry Falwell and his "Moral Majority" are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars across the country to stop Gay/Lesbian rights.

A local printer refused to print our first newsletter because of its content.

A local bank refused to open a joint bank account for a well-known Gay couple.

The Unitarian-Universalist Association openly supports Gay/Lesbian rights.

Mobile Mental Health has actively trained and offers continued support for the Gay Helpline volunteers.

The Gay Helpline is in operation every night from 6 p.m. to midnight for anyone needing someone to talk to -- check it out.

The local bar owners and managers -- Chuck, Miss Betty, Jim, John, Grace and David -- make the printing and mailing of this newsletter possible.

The bar owners and managers donated money and supplies for the kick-off party to celebrate the opening of the Helpline, and that we will be raising funds for the Helpline from time to time, due to their generosity.

...from the pastor

SAUL AND ANOMIE

In the late 1800's, the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, coined the word ANOMIE (without a name) to explain the psychological state of strangers, people at the edge of social movements with enormous change, and people who belonged to subcultures where they were unsure of what the social expectations were within a dominant group. They felt, as James Baldwin must have, like "nobody knows my name." As a matter of fact, in a true state of anomie, it's more like "I don't even know my own name." Durkheim postulated that when a society is experiencing great anomie, the suicide rate goes up. When I read of Saul, the first king of Israel in the Bible, I realized that even in Biblical times, people knew the concept of anomie, even though they didn't know the word.

Saul lived in an anomic time. He was a soldier who had been trained in the old skills of warfare before iron was invented. Suddenly, there was iron. And iron was so strong that all the weapons he had been taught to use were nearly useless. So he learned to use iron, but he was never comfortable with it. Then the people of his area learned about a new God, and all the things he was used to in the old gods were outdated. To add to his problems, Jahweh decided Saul should be king of Israel. Saul wasn't from a royal family (there weren't any royal families in Israel -- he was the first) and he didn't know how a king behaved, he'd never even had a king. But Jahweh had selected him to be king. And still worse, his son gets friendly with this David fellow -- and he knows there's something strange there -- but can that fellow play the harp! He wasn't even permitted to ask the seer what was going to happen, and feel secure, he had to trust this Jahweh God. Saul learned to adapt -- but he was never happy with the new ways, and when things really got tough, he looked to his old gods and went over to see the Witch of Endor to find out what the enemy had in store. That was where he and Jahweh God parted. Poor Saul. He was caught in a world he hardly understood! Everything was changing, nothing seemed to have a center. How he wished for the good old days, when the gods were secure, the military knew what they were doing, the country had the right kind of folk leading it, and people knew how to behave-- knew the rules. Saul was so confused, he hardly knew his own name any more. He was a real case of anomie. And eventually, he did what Durkheim postulated -- he committed suicide.

Can you see some parallels? Many people today feel that sense of anomie. The world has changed so rapidly that people are frightened. They want some sense of the past to hold on to. God, they pray, make it safe again, let me know what to expect! Many Christians are at that point. The world has changed so greatly that they are frightened. Nuclear energy, great social upheaval -- especially within the time of the baby boomers; new forms of government--like Communism and socialism -- scare them. The questioning of old beliefs and the arising of new ideas --all of these together are frightening for people who remember how simple it was when everybody knew what to expect. When the milk train stopped and the old time religion had meaning for everyone -- when everyone was American and your neighbor wasn't a Cambodian Buddhist, a Russian Jew, a Japanese Taoist and your son or daughter hadn't picked up some new religion like the Moonies. When sexuality and sex roles were simple -- men were men and women were girls, and nobody they knew was gay. People out there are scared. And they want the old time religion that had meaning and they want to go back to the time when everybody knew the rules. Well, it's that kind of time, and Jerry Falwell plays upon the fears of those people, and promises them "The Old Time Gospel Hour" and tells them who the enemy is (us), and they follow him, and he profits, and profits, and profits.

But maybe there's more to it than that. Durkheim was also talking about anomie being a condition for strangers and sojourners and for people in subcultures. Maybe there's something there for us, as well. Gay liberation has called us to come out -- it has asked us to change our ways and to trust God to help us find a way to be a new kind of gay people-- strong, and open, and fearless. And

WELCOME

SOOM AND DIGNITY TO BEGIN IN MOBILE

Efforts are being made to organize two new organizations for gay and Lesbian people in Mobile. According to John P., who is spearheading the drive, the Silver Owls of Mobile (SOOM) and a Dignity chapter are looking for persons interested in these groups.

SOOM is a social group for older people, usually over the age of 40, and for younger people who like to be with older gays and Lesbians.

Dignity is an organization for gay Catholics and their friends. The chapter will be part of the national organization that consists of over 117 chapters across the nation.

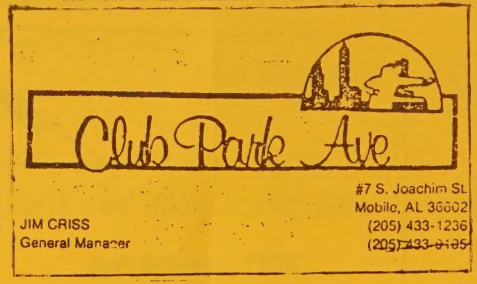
"Too often gay and Lesbian Catholics feel alienated from their church. Dignity has been successful in being a bridge for these people to rebuild a religious life. Also, Dignity has been effective in creating a dialogue with the church's hierarchy," said John P.

He noted that the SOOM organization is simply an attempt to bring people together in a social context. "Many older gays and Lesbians simply have no social place to go except the bars, where they are usually ignored by younger people. SOOM will be an attempt to provide a congenial group for dinner parties, theater and other outings.

Anyone interested in SOOM or Dignity is asked to contact John at 342-7891, or the HELPLINE at 476-9142.

FIRST NIGHTERS

People interested in going to theater: Involves joining Joe Jefferson Players ($25.00 for 6 plays/musicals) plus other theater presentations. Call HELPLINE for further information - 476-9142.



...from the pastor

maybe we, too, are like the Falwell followers. It was so secure in my closet. I was so comfortable hiding. I really don't need these new, frightening ideas of openness and liberation, do I? Oh, yes, you do. You need them for your mental health, you need them for your ability to be a whole person, you need them in a world of change, so that you can change with the world and not be stuck, as Saul was, in fear. Saul clung to the old gods, and could not trust Jahweh God -- and he lost. Most of us try the same thing. We stick to our old gods, our closetedness and our lies. God sees through us -- God knows who we are, and God loves us enough to invite us to be KING. Be all you can be, be the royal person God invites you to be. The alternative for far too many of us has been Saul's solution, suicide; the death of who we really are or can be. The gay community is growing up, and learning that in taking risks there is strength and growth. Don't be a Saul -- be a David. Take the risks -- and grow!

COMING OUT

I've often heard Rev. Marge quote her friend from Providence, Ray LaRiviere, who coined a phrase about gay attitudes, "As long as I can boogie, I'm free." A lot of us started out the same way. If it hadn't been for Gay/Lesbian bars, we would have had nothing. Work, a relationship, maybe -- and then party time at the bars. But heavens, don't ask me to meet your there before the sun went down.

We remain in our closets, doing nothing, hoping and sometimes even praying that no one ever discovers who we "really are." From birth, almost, we are conditioned that to be Gay/Lesbian is a fate worse than death. So we hide and we die a thousand deaths each day. And then one day something wakes us up and we come face to face with years of playing "straight" games. The roles we adopted are unbelievable and staggering, not to mention the toll oppression has taken on our lives.

Sane or insane? The medical world finally realized our sexual preferences had nothing to do with our sanity. Yet, many of our people have difficulty making it through life. Many suffer dependency problems -- sexual, drug, alcohol -- many are emotionally crippled by "oppression sickness." They really don't remain sane in world that tries to crush them.

To many of you out there, "coming out" would be insane. For many it would be. The greatest day of my life, however, was when I became insane. Oh, I'd already come out to some very selected "straight" friends, having carefully tested the waters before ever diving. Heck, they already knew who I was anyway.

Things started changing the day I walked into the new MCC. Sweat poured down my back, fear gripped every part of my body. I made myself sit in the second pew from the front, another bold move for me. I looked behind me, and came face to face with an older "straight couple." I muttered some weird excuse (to whom I still don't know) and got up to leave. But I didn't.

I made it through the daylight. I made it through the service in God's house. I was introduced to the older couple and lived. Last week at Bruno's I happened to notice my attire and chuckled to myself. My MCC teeshirt looked quite nice! A couple of people gave me knowing smiles, but most of the shoppers paid no attention to me. Most of them, if they knew what an MCC was wouldn't have cared anyway. Most of your professional associates, your families, your straight friends probably know who you are right now. Some may not want the confrontation of being told, but many would welcome your openness and applaud your courage and honesty.

For years, a small minority ran my life. Now I'm in charge. IT FEELS GOOD!!!

October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
UU WORSHIP 10:30 AM ev. every Sunday	NOVEMBER 1982 ROCKY HORROR SHOW AT ESQUIRE WITH OSTRIS	1	2 RAP; Who's on Top-- Power in Relationships.	3		[illegible]ER'S ANNIVERSARY
6 MCC WORSHIP 7:00 P.M. 5:30 New Memb.	7	8	9 RAP: Peer Pressure - Handling your friends.	10	11	12 COLUMBUS DAY
13 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 3:00Shrimp Boil at DAVID'sII UU VOLLEYBALL	14 COLUMBUS DAY OBSERVED	15	16 RAP Cross-Generational Relationships	17	18 UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS 2-DAY WORKSHOP	19 "The Haunting Church"
20 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 5:30 New Memb	21	22	23 RAP HOLDING HANDS Making a political statement.	24	25	26
27 MCC WORSHIP-7pm UU VOLLEYBALL 5:30 New Memb MOTHER-IN-LAW DAY	28	29	30 RAP HOMOPHOBIA -- THEIRS AND OURS	31 HOOKER'S BALL ALL THE BARS HALLOWEEN		

CLASSIFIED ADS

Weekend Sketch Group -- interested? Call the HELPLINE for information.

WRITERS GROUP -- Meet once a month for social contact and constructive criticism of members' work. Bring a piece of writing for criticism, and ke p a log of the number of hours spent wri ting. Contact Shirley L. at the HELPLINE.

BIKERS (no, silly, not that kind!) are being sought for a bike riding group. Ride, bring lunch and picnic-- weather will be perfect soon.

Halloween

FOR SALE: SCM Electric Typewriter, ribbon spool. Best offer. Evenings 8-10. 342-7891, ask for John.

PLUMBING - Indoors, reasonable rates. Expert service. Call evenings after 6, or Mondays, 476-5171, as for Harry.

CLEANING-INTERIOR PAINTING, WALLPAPER. Organize your precious collectibles?? Excellent references in both communities. 476-9142, ask for Shirley.

BOWLING LEAGUE -- Members of MCC want to form a bowling team to hopefully compete against other gay groups (bars, etc.). At least six teams are needed. Call the HELPLINE if you are interested.

SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.
433-9141

SUN. - THURS. 10 A. M. - 2 A.M.
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS

ESQUIRE
BAR & LOUNGE

— Phone 433-9175 —
Mon.-Fri. 9:30 a.m. Till
Sat. 9:30 a.m.-2a.m.
13 South Joachim St. Mobile, Ala.

The Metropolitan Community Church
AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD — MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA, Pastor — (205) 476-9142

Volume 1, No. 2 — October 1985

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART...

The veil of distaste and misconceptions surrounding the gay segment of the population is nowhere better illustrated than in the film, "God, Gays and the Gospel," a no-nonsense look at the rapid rise of the Metropolitan Community Church.

One of the most poignant plights of gay people in today's world is the denial of their right to worship by most of the traditional organized religions. Almost without exception the Christian faith has taken upon itself the right to refuse gays a part in the Family of God.

The long struggle by MCC founder Rev. Troy Perry to establish a faith, not just for gays but for anyone, is the focus of the film. In concise, to the point terms, the production addresses the sheer magnitude of the work being done and the forward strides being made by Perry and his legion of pastors and congregations.

Since its founding in 1969, MCC has endured everything from ridicule to bombings to burned-out church sanctuaries. More than 17 years later, Perry and his followers have forged a recognized, respected faith wherein all are welcomed. It is a tribute to the ecumenical and accepting nature of this church that 20 per cent of its members are non-gay. It is a true illustration of the overused, misused term, "real Christian people."

Perry, a transplanted Floridian, excluded from the church of his childhood, spent years berating himself as "unacceptable." In the end, he determined that there is no reason -- save for human bigotry and Biblical misinterpretation -- for gays to be denied a right to their faith. Nowhere in the Bible, he points out, is there condemnation of homosexuality as it is understood today. In one of his most moving sermons, he presents a stunning point: "If AIDS is God's "gift" to the homosexual, then is toxic shock syndrome God's "gift" to women for being female? ...or is Legionnaires' Disease God's "gift" to the American Legion for being too patriotic?

From the perspective of a "straight," the message of "God, Gays, and the Gospel" is very much to the point: No human deserves the right to tell another he or she will never be acceptable in the eyes of God. Moreover, it should be remembered that Perry et al are not working for immediate and total social acceptance, but for establishment of a climate of cooperation and understanding.

No "straight" who professes a concern for human rights should let gays bear this struggle alone.

(Note: N.J.Green is MCC at Mobile's "token straight," our assistant organist. Thank God for our "straight" friends.)

REMINDER

MCC MEMBERS-ATTENTION!

Congregational Meeting, October 27, following worship service. Election of officers, other important business, including coming into agreement with GSS changes.

FROM THE EDITOR--

Our first issue was a roaring success, so the community tells us. We personally wish to thank the bar owners and managers for making the newsletter a reality, rather than the "dream" so many of us have talked about for the last couple of years. At last we have a way to communicate ideas among gays in Mobile. We also want to apologize to Chuck at Troopers for omitting a news item last month. Thanks for bearing with us and our mistakes -- we'll get it right with practice. A word of thanks to all of you out there from the small group at MCC. Because of you the newsletter will continue to grow, to increase our awareness and to solidify the community.

To date we have received the names "Revelations," "Mobile Pride News," and "Genesis." Don't be bashful. Send or call in your suggestion.

We stated our purpose last month, "to offer a news source for the entire community." We are happy to report that this issue, our second, has accomplished that goal. Sincere applause to each organization and business for your participation. We are open to your suggestions and your criticism. Our new feature. "Community Profile" has already been designated for the November issue. Send in the name of someone you wish to acknowledge in a future issue.

Our editorial policy requires that a name and address be submitted along with newscopy. Your name and address will not be printed without your written consent, but we must have this information to protect the legal position of the church. Please drop editorial copy or editorial replies at the church or mail them to: MCC Newsletter, P.O. Box 8524, Mobile, Ala. 36608. The deadline for all copy is the Third Monday of the Month.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

NEWS FROM THE LESBIAN TASK FORCE OF NOW

Two important pieces of legislation are going to be brought to Congress in this year, NOW has informed us. One, is H.R. 230, the Federal Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights Legislation which is spearheaded by Representative Ted Weiss of Brooklyn, N.Y. and carries the endorsement of 44 other representatives, including Rep. Gerry Studds of Massachusetts, an openly gay legislator. The bill primarily calls for the insertion of the words, "affexional or sexual orientation," throughout the Civil Rights Act of 1964, following the word "color," and in other legislation, like the Equal opportunity Act, where it is inserted after "sex." thus identifying gay and Lesbian discrimination as equal to that against people of color and as pervasive as sexism. Interestingly, the same act speaks against acts of intimidation or violence against gays and Lesbians in the same passage that it speaks about violence against religious groups.

The other piece of legislation is the now infamous McCarran-Walter act, which prohibits certain people from entering the United States because of political or sexual orientation. Farley Mowat, the Canadian author of such dangerous books as the environmental study, "Never Cry Wolf," and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Colombia's Nobel Prize Winning novelist, were both excluded -- and refused to be singled out as special cases -- under this Act. Gay men and women can be refused entry into the U.S. -- and have been -- by the terms of the McCarran Act. It is important for the McCarran Act to not include gays and Lesbians under the heading of those accused of "moral turpitude."

The legislation above is entitled Immigration Exclusion and Deportation Amendments of 1985. The first is HR 230. Your congressional representative will vote on both of these. Make your wishes known. One letter -- one letter -- can make the difference, because very few letters on any subject are received from constituents, and as many as five or six letters can seem like an avalanche. If you are interested in how to write to Congress, call the HELPLINE for a copy of MCC's booklet, Writing to Congress, from MCC's Department of Christian Social Action.

Bulletin Board

ORDER OF OSIRIS - "The Rocky Horror Show" Friday and Saturday, November 1 and 2, Presented by the Order of Osiris and the Esquire House -- at the Esquire House. $5.00 admission. See an Osiris member or your bartender for tickets.

Less than 140 days to Osiris' 5th Anniversary Mardi Gras Ball, February 7, 1986.

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - Study series for 4 weeks on Men's Life and Men's Issues. Call the UU's at 342-6834 for information and starting date (near the end of the month.)

2-day Workshop -- The Haunting Church October 18 and 19 at the UU Fellowship 6345 Old Shell Road.

Volleyball -- every 2nd and 4th Sunday, at 2 P.M. at the UU's, weather permitting.

better gay than grumpy

TROOPERS - Shuffleboard tournaments every Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. Pool tournaments every Thursday at 8:30. Some of the best popcorn in Mobile.

CORRAL - Pool tournament every Monday at 9:00 p.m. Please watch for announcements of upcoming Halloween events.

CPA - Costume contest at midnight in conjunction with Hooker's Ball.

Free buffet every Sunday at 9:30 p.m.

Watch for "Name that Tune" to begin early NOvember on Sunday evenings.

DAVID'S II - Special Guest, Halloween Eve through Saturday, Carmen Del Rio.

First Sunday of October begins David's free buffet from 3-9 p.m., and the Tea Dance.

Shrimp boil, Sunday October 13th, from 3 til? To help raise funds for MCC's HELPLINE and newsletter. $3.00 cover, includes all the boiled shrimp you can eat, along with other goodies.

ESQUIRE - Rocky Horror Show November 1 and 2 at 9:30 p.m. Get your tickets from Esquire or any Osiris member. $5.00 per ticket.

PROFILE

Did you enjoy Mobile's Gay Pride 85? Our first profile is, Harry, organizer and leader of Pride 85. Harry was the catalyst that brought together the various elements of the community. It wasn't his first time out, certainly not his first effort for our benefit. Fifteen years in the Mobile area has seen Harry speaking at the University of South Alabama and Springhill College on Gay/Lesbian issues. He was one of the strong leaders of the old Gulf Alliance for Equality as well.

When Harry isn't working on our behalf, he enjoys meeting the public in his retail profession. While there's still daylight after a hard day at work, you might see him out bicycling or running, or on Sundays offering his talents at the Unitarian-Universalists' worship and fellowship. "My religion," Harry said, has given me a lot more direction in my life, and a greater sense of freedom to allow my own beliefs to evolve."

Harry offered the following thoughts about and reflections on Gay Pride'85: '85 was very successfull considering the late starting date for planning. '84, our first Gay Pride Activity, made '85 much easier to put together. Adding more organizations -- the UU's and MCC -- added much to '85's success. Without Danni B. '85 would not have come toether. A SPECIAL THANKS TO HER.

For 1986 Gay Pride, Harry foresees greatness. "For once, we are starting off with some money, $186.00, thanks to the bars. We will begin planning at a much earlier date, offering the same type of activities, with more variety, however. We will certainly push for more publicity and participation from all the organizations. We want Gay Pride to be financially self-supporting, and there's no reason it shouldn't be if we all work at it."

When asked what he would change if given the right opportunity, Harry offered the following: "I'd like to see more open Gay/Lesbian businesses, organizations, and individuals come out, and a greater media presence for the community. However, the fear of coming out is still our greatest obstacle. Most of us, including me, still face job discrimination, neighborhood harassment, and the possible loss of our families or their strong disapproval."

In a larger context, Harry went on, "Much of our recent publicity has been derogatory. I feel that the Moral Majority uses us as their biggest fundraiser, particularly now that AIDS has come to the forefront of the news media."

Harry is one of the strongest and most open figures in our Mobile Gay Community, and with his support and leadership, gay Mobile should reach the goals which he is helping us set.

SOCIETY LOUNGE - Beginning in October, the first weekend each month, Miss Betty will be presenting weekend shows at 10 and 12 midnight. No cover.

SOMETHING TO SELL, SERVICE TO OFFER?? Call 476-9142 for rates and deadlines. Please NO PERSONALS, except Birthday, Anniversary, Thank You's.

TROOPERS
215 Conti Street
438-9139
HOURS: 11 a.m.-3 a.m.

CORRAL
54 So. Conception
433-9258
Weekdays - Noon Till
Weekends - 24 hours

THERE IS NO LONGER AN EXCUSE FOR SPREADING AIDS

Right now in the gay community, we're faced with some extremely difficult decisions because of AIDS -- sexual decisions affecting our lives and life-styles. We Gaymen have come up with a lot of excuses for avoiding the issue.

We all know that safer sex can reduce the risk of contracting and spreading AIDS. Some practices are more effective than others; some we have questions about.

We all need to make informed decisions, not excuses. You'll probably agree that none of the following excuses justify the pread of AIDS in our community:

"WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And it's the community's. Everyone must take a concerned and active role if we're going to stop the spread of this disease.

Here's another common excuse: "If someone doesn't ask me to practice safer sex, I figure that's his decision and I respect it."

Why? Aren't you concerned? Perhaps your partner is just as uncomfortable in raising the issue as you are.

"WHOSE LIFE IS IT, ANYWAY?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And the community's. The excuse, "It's my life," is only partly true. The life of your partner and the well-being of the community are also at stake.

AIDS is not just a physical problem. There are political, social, and economic effects as well. There is already evidence that social freedoms may be restricted because of AIDS. AIDS can be used as an excuse for anti-Gay action and legislation.

Making decisions about sexual practices is difficult. Sticking to those decisions is even more difficult. But this isn't a moral issue; it's a matter of life and death.

"CHANGING MY SEX LIFE ISN"T A CURE FOR AIDS."

That's true. There is no cure or vaccine. And researchers think they are years away from developing one. Safer sexual practices are our best means right now of reducing our risk and stopping the spread of AIDS.

"CHANGE? NOBODY ELSE IS DOING IT!"

The fact is that a major research project conducted by the AIDS Foundation among San Francisco Gaymen revealed that two-thirds of the Gay community is making a serious effort to reduce their risk by practicing safer sex. Two-thirds!

Talk about it. Even though its a difficult subject for everyone, chances are your partner is just as concerned as you are and would probably welcome a chance to discuss it.

Let's stop making excuses. Let's stop the spread of AIDS.

Reprinted from ACTS 29, Newsletter of [illegible]

Rectal gonorrhea has declined 86% since the AIDS scare -- people are aware of risks and are changing their sexual habits. Safe sex works.

Bulletin Board

HOOKER'S BALL - HALLOWEEN NIGHT -- Presented by all your favorite bars and the Order of Osiris. Prizes for costumes, all bars are involved, begins 7:00 p.m. Hallowe'en night, costumes are invited, and you are especially requested to attend this celebration of what is turning into the second most exciting activity of the year.

Birthdays

HAPPY BIRTHDAY - Queen Richard, Oct.9, from all the folks at Esquire House.

Label JARS Not PEOPLE

ANNIVERSARY

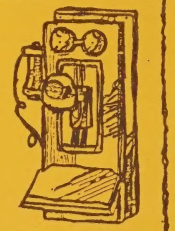
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY - Oct. 5 to Chuck at Troopers on their 2nd Year of fun and support of the community.

HAPPY BELATED ANNIVERSARY TO CPA - We were not notified in time for publication last month, but CPA celebrated their 2nd anniversary on Sept. 27th. Great going, guys!

476-9142

Gay

Help-line



We met at

DAVID'S II

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985

from the fellowship

"FREE TO BE"

12TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF MCC

Sacramento, California. The conference got off to an exciting start. Rev. Elders Freda Smith and Nancy Wilson both preached Monday. I especially enjoyed hearing them. The film, "God, Gays, and the Gospel" was also shown for the first time on Monday.

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...from the pastor

SAUL AND ANOMIE

In the late 1800's, the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, coined the word ANOMIE (without a name) to explain the psychological state of strangers, people at the edge of social movements with enormous change, and people who belonged to subcultures where they were unsure of what the social expectations were within a dominant group. They felt, as James Baldwin must have, like "nobody knows my name." As a matter of fact, in a true state of anomie, it's more like "I don't even know my own name." Durkheim postulated that when a society is experiencing great anomie, the suicide rate goes up. When I read of Saul, the first king of Israel in the Bible, I realized that even in Biblical times, people knew the concept of anomie, even though they didn't know the word.

Saul lived in an anomic time. He was a soldier who had been trained in the old skills of warfare before iron was invented. Suddenly, there was iron. And iron was so strong that all the weapons he had been taught to use were nearly useless. So he learned to use iron, but he was never comfortable with it. Then the people of his area learned about a new God, and all the things he was used to in the old gods were outdated. To add to his problems, Jahweh decided Saul should be king of Israel. Saul wasn't from a royal family (there weren't any royal families in Israel -- he was the first) and he didn't know how a king behaved, he'd never even had a king. But Jahweh had selected him to be king. And still worse, his son gets friendly with this David fellow -- and he knows there's something strange there -- but can that fellow play the harp! He wasn't even permitted to ask the seer what was going to happen, and feel secure, he had to trust this Jahweh God. Saul learned to adapt -- but he was never happy with the new ways, and when things really got tough, he looked to his old gods and went over to see the Witch of Endor to find out what the enemy had in store. That was where he and Jahweh God parted. Poor Saul. He was caught in a world he hardly understood! Everything was changing, nothing seemed to have a center. How he wished for the good old days, when the gods were secure, the military knew what they were doing, the country had the right kind of folk leading it, and people knew how to behave-- knew the rules. Saul was so confused, he hardly knew his own name any more. He was a real case of anomie. And eventually, he did what Durkheim postulated -- he committed suicide.

Can you see some parallels? Many people today feel that sense of anomie. The world has changed so rapidly that people are frightened. They want some sense of the past to hold on to. God, they pray, make it safe again, let me know what to expect! Many Christians are at that point. The world has changed so greatly that they are frightened. Nuclear energy, great social upheaval -- especially within the time of the baby boomers; new forms of government--like Communism and socialism -- scare them. The questioning of old beliefs and the arising of new ideas --all of these together are frightening for people who remember how simple it was when everybody knew what to expect. When the milk train stopped and the old time religion had meaning for everyone -- when everyone was American and your neighbor wasn't a Cambodian Buddhist, a Russian Jew, a Japanese Taoist and your son or daughter hadn't picked up some new religion like the Moonies. When sexuality and sex roles were simple -- men were men and women were girls, and nobody they knew was gay. People out there are scared. And they want the old time religion that had meaning and they want to go back to the time when everybody knew the rules. Well, it's that kind of time, and Jerry Falwell plays upon the fears of those people, and promises them "The Old Time Gospel Hour" and tells them who the enemy is (us), and they follow him, and he profits, and profits, and profits.

But maybe there's more to it than that. Durkheim was also talking about anomie being a condition for strangers and sojourners and for people in subcultures. Maybe there's something there for us, as well. Gay liberation has called us to come out -- it has asked us to change our ways and to trust God to help us find a way to be a new kind of gay people-- strong, and open, and fearless. And

WELCOME

SOOM AND DIGNITY TO BEGIN IN MOBILE

Efforts are being made to organize two new organizations for gay and Lesbian people in Mobile. According to John P., who is spearheading the drive, the Silver Owls of Mobile (SOOM) and a Dignity chapter are looking for persons interested in these groups.

SOOM is a social group for older people, usually over the age of 40, and for younger people who like to be with older gays and Lesbians.

Dignity is an organization for gay Catholics and their friends. The chapter will be part of the national organization that consists of over 117 chapters across the nation.

"Too often gay and Lesbian Catholics feel alienated from their church. Dignity has been successful in being a bridge for these people to rebuild a religious life. Also, Dignity has been effective in creating a dialogue with the church's hierarchy," said John P.

He noted that the SOOM organization is simply an attempt to bring people together in a social context. "Many older gays and Lesbians simply have no social place to go except the bars, where they are usually ignored by younger people. SOOM will be an attempt to provide a congenial group for dinner parties, theater and other outings.

Anyone interested in SOOM or Dignity is asked to contact John at 342-7891, or the HELPLINE at 476-9142.

FIRST NIGHTERS

People interested in going to theater: Involves joining Joe Jefferson Players ($25.00 for 6 plays/musicals) plus other theater presentations. Call HELPLINE for further information - 476-9142.

Club Park Ave
#7 S. Joachim St.
Mobile, AL 36602
JIM CRISS
General Manager
(205) 433-1236
(205) 433-9185

...from the pastor

maybe we, too, are like the Falwell followers. It was so secure in my closet. I was so comfortable hiding. I really don't need these new, frightening ideas of openness and liberation, do I? Oh, yes, you do. You need them for your mental health, you need them for your ability to be a whole person, you need them in a world of change, so that you can change with the world and not be stuck, as Saul was, in fear. Saul clung to the old gods, and could not trust Jahweh God -- and he lost. Most of us try the same thing. We stick to our old gods, our closetedness and our lies. God sees through us -- God knows who we are, and God loves us enough to invite us to be KING. Be all you can be, be the royal person God invites you to be. The alternative for far too many of us has been Saul's solution, suicide; the death of who we really are or can be. The gay community is growing up, and learning that in taking risks there is strength and growth. Don't be a Saul -- be a David. Take the risks -- and grow!

COMING OUT

I've often heard Rev. Marge quote her friend from Providence, Ray LaRiviere, who coined a phrase about gay attitudes, "As long as I can boogie, I'm free." A lot of us started out the same way. If it hadn't been for Gay/Lesbian bars, we would have had nothing. Work, a relationship, maybe -- and then party time at the bars. But heavens, don't ask me to meet your there before the sun went down.

We remain in our closets, doing nothing, hoping and sometimes even praying that no one ever discovers who we "really are." From birth, almost, we are conditioned that to be Gay/Lesbian is a fate worse than death. So we hide and we die a thousand deaths each day. And then one day something wakes us up and we come face to face with years of playing "straight" games. The roles we adopted are unbelievable and staggering, not to mention the toll oppression has taken on our lives.

Sane or insane? The medical world finally realized our sexual preferences had nothing to do with our sanity. Yet, many of our people have difficulty making it through life. Many suffer dependency problems -- sexual, drug, alcohol -- many are emotionally crippled by "oppression sickness." They really don't remain sane in world that tries to crush them.

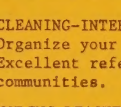
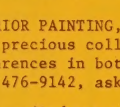
To many of you out there, "coming out" would be insane. For many it would be. The greatest day of my life, however, was when I became insane. Oh, I'd already come out to some very selected "straight" friends, having carefully tested the waters before ever diving. Heck, they already knew who I was anyway.

Things started changing the day I walked into the new MCC. Sweat poured down my back, fear gripped every part of my body. I made myself sit in the second pew from the front, another bold move for me. I looked behind me, and came face to face with an older "straight couple." I muttered some weird excuse (to whom I still don't know) and got up to leave. But I didn't.

I made it through the daylight. I made it through the service in God's house. I was introduced to the older couple and lived. Last week at Bruno's I happened to notice my attire and chuckled to myself. My MCC teeshirt looked quite nice! A couple of people gave me knowing smiles, but most of the shoppers paid no attention to me. Most of them, if they knew what an MCC was wouldn't have cared anyway. Most of your professional associates, your families, your straight friends probably know who you are right now. Some may not want the confrontation of being told, but many would welcome your openness and applaud your courage and honesty.

For years, a small minority ran my life. Now I'm in charge. IT FEELS GOOD!!!

October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
UU WORSHIP 10:30 AM ev. every Sunday	NOVEMBER 1st ROCKY HORROR SHOW AT ESQUIRE WITH OSTRIS	1	2 RAP; Who's on Top-- Power in Relationships.	3		ER'S ANNIVERSARY
6 MCC WORSHIP 7:00 P.M. 5:30 New Memb	7	8	9 RAP: Peer Pressure - Handling your friends.	10	11	12 COLUMBUS DAY
13 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 3:00Shrimp Boil at DAVID'S!!! UU VOLLEYBALL	14 COLUMBUS DAY OBSERVED	15	16 RAP Cross-Generational Relationships	17	18 UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS 2-DAY WORKSHOP	19 "The Haunting Church"
20 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 5:30 New Memb	21	22	23 RAP HOLDING HANDS Making a political statement.	24	25	26
27 MCC WORSHIP-7pm UU VOLLEYBALL 5:30 New Memb MOTHER-IN-LAW DAY	28	29	30 RAP HOMOPHOBIA -- THEIRS AND OURS	31 HOOKER'S BALL ALL THE BARS HALLOWEEN		

CLASSIFIED ADS

Weekend Sketch Group -- interested? Call the HELPLINE for information.

WRITERS GROUP -- Meet once a month for social contact and constructive criticism of members' work. Bring a piece of writing for criticism, and ke p a log of the number of hours spent wri ting. Contact Shirley L. at the HELPLINE.

BIKERS (no, silly, not that kind!) are being sought for a bike riding group. Ride, bring lunch and picnic-- weather will be perfect soon.

Halloween

FOR SALE: SCM Electric Typewriter, ribbon spool. Best offer. Evenings 8-10. 342-7891, ask for John.

PLUMBING - Indoors, reasonable rates. Expert service. Call evenings after 6, or Mondays, 476-5171, as for Harry.

CLEANING-INTERIOR PAINTING, WALLPAPER. Organize your precious collectibles?? Excellent references in both communities. 476-9142, ask for Shirley.

BOWLING LEAGUE -- Members of MCC want to form a bowling team to hopefully compete against other gay groups (bars, etc.). At least six teams are needed. Call the HELPLINE if you are interested.

SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.
433-9141

SUN. - THURS. 10 A. M. - 2 A. M.
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS

ESQUIRE
BAR & LOUNGE

— Phone 433-9175 —
Mon.-Fri. 9:30 a.m. Till
Sat. 9:30 a.m.-2a.m.
13 South Joachim St. Mobile, Ala.

The Metropolitan Community Church
AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD — MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA
Pastor

(205) 476-9142

Volume 1, No. 2 — October 1985

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART...

The veil of distaste and misconceptions surrounding the gay segment of the population is nowhere better illustrated than in the film, "God, Gays and the Gospel," a no-nonsense look at the rapid rise of the Metropolitan Community Church.

One of the most poignant plights of gay people in today's world is the denial of their right to worship by most of the traditional organized religions. Almost without exception the Christian faith has taken upon itself the right to refuse gays a part in the Family of God.

The long struggle by MCC founder Rev. Troy Perry to establish a faith, not just for gays but for anyone, is the focus of the film. In concise, to the point terms, the production addresses the sheer magnitude of the work being done and the forward strides being made by Perry and his legion of pastors and congregations.

Since its founding in 1969, MCC has endured everything from ridicule to bombings to burned-out church sanctuaries. More than 17 years later, Perry and his followers have forged a recognized, respected faith wherein all are welcomed. It is a tribute to the ecumenical and accepting nature of this church that 20 per cent of its members are non-gay. It is a true illustration of the overused, misused term, "real Christian people."

Perry, a transplanted Floridian, excluded from the church of his childhood, spent years berating himself as "unacceptable." In the end, he determined that there is no reason -- save for human bigotry and Biblical misinterpretation -- for gays to be denied a right to their faith. Nowhere in the Bible, he points out, is there condemnation of homosexuality as it is understood today. In one of his most moving sermons, he presents a stunning point: "If AIDS is God's "gift" to the homosexual, then is toxic shock syndrome God's "gift" to women for being female? ...or is Legionnaires' Disease God's "gift" to the American Legion for being too patriotic?

From the perspective of a "straight," the message of "God, Gays, and the Gospel" is very much to the point: No human deserves the right to tell another he or she will never be acceptable in the eyes of God. Moreover, it should be remembered that Perry et al are not working for immediate and total social acceptance, but for establishment of a climate of cooperation and understanding.

No "straight" who professes a concern for human rights should let gays bear this struggle alone.

(Note: N.J.Green is MCC at Mobile's "token straight," our assistant organist. Thank God for our "straight" friends.)

REMINDER

MCC MEMBERS-ATTENTION!
Congregational Meeting, October 27, following worship service. Election of officers, other important business, including coming into agreement with GSS changes.

FROM THE EDITOR--

Our first issue was a roaring success, so the community tells us. We personally wish to thank the bar owners and managers for making the newsletter a reality, rather than the "dream" so many of us have talked about for the last couple of years. At last we have a way to communicate ideas among gays in Mobile. We also want to apologize to Chuck at Troopers for omitting a news item last month. Thanks for bearing with us and our mistakes -- we'll get it right with practice. A word of thanks to all of you out there from the small group at MCC. Because of you the newsletter will continue to grow, to increase our awareness and to solidify the community.

To date we have received the names "Revelations," "Mobile Pride News," and "Genesis." Don't be bashful. Send or call in your suggestion.

We stated our purpose last month, "to offer a news source for the entire community." We are happy to report that this issue, our second, has accomplished that goal. Sincere applause to each organization and business for your participation. We are open to your suggestions and your criticism. Our new feature. "Community Profile" has already been designated for the November issue. Send in the name of someone you wish to acknowledge in a future issue.

Our editorial policy requires that a name and address be submitted along with newscopy. Your name and address will not be printed without your written consent, but we must have this information to protect the legal position of the church. Please drop editorial copy or editorial replies at the church or mail them to: MCC Newsletter, P.O. Box 8524, Mobile, Ala. 36608. The deadline for all copy is the Third Monday of the Month.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

NEWS FROM THE LESBIAN TASK FORCE OF NOW

Two important pieces of legislation are going to be brought to Congress in this year, NOW has informed us. One, is H.R. 230, the Federal Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights Legislation which is spearheaded by Representative Ted Weiss of Brooklyn, N.Y. and carries the endorsement of 44 other representatives, including Rep. Gerry Studds of Massachusetts, an openly gay legislator. The bill primarily calls for the insertion of the words, "affexional or sexual orientation," throughout the Civil Rights Act of 1964, following the word "color," and in other legislation, like the Equal opportunity Act, where it is inserted after "sex." thus identifying gay and Lesbian discrimination as equal to that against people of color and as pervasive as sexism. Interestingly, the same act speaks against acts of intimidation or violence against gays and Lesbians in the same passage that it speaks about violence against religious groups.

The other piece of legislation is the now infamous McCarran-Walter act, which prohibits certain people from entering the United States because of political or sexual orientation. Farley Mowat, the Canadian author of such dangerous books as the environmental study, "Never Cry Wolf," and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Colombia's Nobel Prize Winning novelist, were both excluded -- and refused to be singled out as special cases -- under this Act. Gay men and women can be refused entry into the U.S. -- and have been -- by the terms of the McCarran Act. It is important for the McCarran Act to not include gays and Lesbians under the heading of those accused of "moral turpitude."

The legislation above is entitled Immigration Exclusion and Deportation Amendments of 1985. The first is HR 230. Your congressional representative will vote on both of these. Make your wishes known. One letter -- one letter -- can make the difference, because very few letters on any subject are received from constituents, and as many as five or six letters can seem like an avalanche. If you are interested in how to write to Congress, call the HELPLINE for a copy of MCC's booklet, Writing to Congress, from MCC's Department of Christian Social Action.

Bulletin Board

ORDER OF OSIRIS - "The Rocky Horror Show" Friday and Saturday, November 1 and 2, Presented by the Order of Osiris and the Esquire House -- at the Esquire House. $5.00 admission. See an Osiris member or your bartender for tickets.

Less than 140 days to Osiris' 5th Anniversary Mardi Gras Ball, February 7, 1986.

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - Study series for 4 weeks on Men's Life and Men's Issues. Call the UU's at 342-6834 for information and starting date (near the end of the month.)

2-day Workshop -- The Haunting Church October 18 and 19 at the UU Fellowship 6345 Old Shell Road.

Volleyball -- every 2nd and 4th Sunday, at 2 P.M. at the UU's, weather permitting.

better gay than grumpy

TROOPERS - Shuffleboard tournaments every Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. Pool tournaments every Thursday at 8:30. Some of the best popcorn in Mobile.

CORRAL - Pool tournament every Monday at 9:00 p.m. Please watch for announcements of upcoming Halloween events.

CPA - Costume contest at midnight in conjunction with Hooker's Ball.

Free buffet every Sunday at 9:30 p.m.

Watch for "Name that Tune" to begin early NOvember on Sunday evenings.

DAVID'S II - Special Guest, Halloween Eve through Saturday, Carmen Del Rio.

First Sunday of October begins David's free buffet from 3-9 p.m., and the Tea Dance.

Shrimp boil, Sunday October 13th, from 3 til? To help raise funds for MCC's HELPLINE and newsletter. $3.00 cover, includes all the boiled shrimp you can eat, along with other goodies.

ESQUIRE - Rocky Horror Show November 1 and 2 at 9:30 p.m. Get your tickets from Esquire or any Osiris member. $5.00 per ticket.

PROFILE

Did you enjoy Mobile's Gay Pride 85? Our first profile is, Harry, organizer and leader of Pride 85. Harry was the catalyst that brought together the various elements of the community. It wasn't his first time out, certainly not his first effort for our benefit. Fifteen years in the Mobile area has seen Harry speaking at the University of South Alabama and Springhill College on Gay/Lesbian issues. He was one of the strong leaders of the old Gulf Alliance for Equality as well.

When Harry isn't working on our behalf, he enjoys meeting the public in his retail profession. While there's still daylight after a hard day at work, you might see him out bicycling or running, or on Sundays offering his talents at the Unitarian-Universalists' worship and fellowship. "My religion," Harry said, has given me a lot more direction in my life, and a greater sense of freedom to allow my own beliefs to evolve."

Harry offered the following thoughts about and reflections on Gay Pride'85: '85 was very successfull considering the late starting date for planning. '84, our first Gay Pride Activity, made '85 much easier to put together. Adding more organizations -- the UU's and MCC -- added much to '85's success. Without Danni B. '85 would not have come toether. A SPECIAL THANKS TO HER.

For 1986 Gay Pride, Harry foresees greatness. "For once, we are starting off with some money, $186.00, thanks to the bars. We will begin planning at a much earlier date, offering the same type of activities, with more variety, however. We will certainly push for more publicity and participation from all the organizations. We want Gay Pride to be financially self-supporting, and there's no reason it shouldn't be if we all work at it."

When asked what he would change if given the right opportunity, Harry offered the following: "I'd like to see more open Gay/Lesbian businesses, organizations, and individuals come out, and a greater media presence for the community. However, the fear of coming out is still our greatest obstacle. Most of us, including me, still face job discrimination, neighborhood harassment, and the possible loss of our families or their strong disapproval."

In a larger context, Harry went on, "Much of our recent publicity has been derogatory. I feel that the Moral Majority uses us as their biggest fundraiser, particularly now that AIDS has come to the forefront of the news media."

Harry is one of the strongest and most open figures in our Mobile Gay Community, and with his support and leadership, gay Mobile should reach the goals which he is helping us set.

SOCIETY LOUNGE -- Beginning in October, the first weekend each month, Miss Betty will be presenting weekend shows at 10 and 12 midnight. No cover.

SOMETHING TO SELL, SERVICE TO OFFER?? Call 476-9142 for rates and deadlines. Please NO PERSONALS, except Birthday, Anniversary, Thank You's.

TROOPERS
215 Conti Street
438-9139
HOURS: 11 a.m.-3 a.m.

CORRAL
54 So. Conception
433-9258
Weekdays - Noon Till
Weekends - 24 hours

THERE IS NO LONGER AN EXCUSE FOR SPREADING AIDS

Right now in the gay community, we're faced with some extremely difficult decisions because of AIDS -- sexual decisions affecting our lives and life-styles. We Gaymen have come up with a lot of excuses for avoiding the issue.

We all know that safer sex can reduce the risk of contracting and spreading AIDS. Some practices are more effective than others; some we have questions about.

We all need to make informed decisions, not excuses. You'll probably agree that none of the following excuses justify the pread of AIDS in our community:

"WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And it's the community's. Everyone must take a concerned and active role if we're going to stop the spread of this disease.

Here's another common excuse: "If someone doesn't ask me to practice safer sex, I figure that's his decision and I respect it."

Why? Aren't you concerned? Perhaps your partner is just as uncomfortable in raising the issue as you are.

"WHOSE LIFE IS IT, ANYWAY?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And the community's. The excuse, "It's my life," is only partly true. The life of your partner and the well-being of the community are also at stake.

AIDS is not just a physical problem. There are political, social, and economic effects as well. There is already evidence that social freedoms may be restricted because of AIDS. AIDS can be used as an excuse for anti-Gay action and legislation.

Making decisions about sexual practices is difficult. Sticking to those decisions is even more difficult. But this isn't a moral issue; it's a matter of life and death.

"CHANGING MY SEX LIFE ISN"T A CURE FOR AIDS."

That's true. There is no cure or vaccine. And researchers think they are years away from developing one. Safer sexual practices are our best means right now of reducing our risk and stopping the spread of AIDS.

"CHANGE? NOBODY ELSE IS DOING IT!"

The fact is that a major research project conducted by the AIDS Foundation among San Francisco Gaymen revealed that two-thirds of the Gay community is making a serious effort to reduce their risk by practicing safer sex. Two-thirds!

Talk about it. Even though its a difficult subject for everyone, chances are your partner is just as concerned as you are and would probably welcome a chance to discuss it.

Let's stop making excuses. Let's stop the spread of AIDS.

Reprinted from ACTS 29, Newsletter of [illegible]

Rectal gonorrhea has declined 86% since the AIDS scare -- people are aware of risks and are changing their sexual habits. Safe sex works.

Bulletin Board

HOOKER'S BALL - HALLOWEEN NIGHT -- Presented by all your favorite bars and the Order of Osiris. Prizes for costumes, all bars are involved, begins 7:00 p.m. Hallowe'en night, costumes are invited, and you are especially requested to attend this celebration of what is turning into the second most exciting activity of the year.

Birthdays

HAPPY BIRTHDAY - Queen Richard, Oct.9, from all the folks at Esquire House.

Label JARS Not PEOPLE

ANNIVERSARY

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY - Oct. 5 to Chuck at Troopers on their 2nd Year of fun and support of the community.

HAPPY BELATED ANNIVERSARY TO CPA - We were not notified in time for publication last month, but CPA celebrated their 2nd anniversary on Sept. 27th. Great going, guys!

476-9142

Gay

Help-line

We met at

DAVID'S II

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985

from the fellowship

"FREE TO BE"

12TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF MCC

Sacramento, California. The conference got off to an exciting start. Rev. Elders Freda Smith and Nancy Wilson both preached Monday. I especially enjoyed hearing them. The film, "God, Gays, and the Gospel" was also shown for the first time on Monday.

The film, a documentary telling about MCC and what it means, cost about $100,000 to make. Many unique aspects of MCC were brought out. The fact that MCC has membrers from every religious background and the highest proportion of women ministers were particularly interesting.

In the business meetings, a great deal was accomplished in the first few days. The Government Structures and Systems proposal was accepted with some minor amendments. Two changes will have the most immediate impact. One is the adoption of the General Council as the governing body of MCC. The General Council will be composed of the Board of Directors and the District Coordinators, thus giving total regional representation at the highest MCC level. The other change is that there will be only commissioned and chartered churches (instead of the three tier system as previously: Study group, mission, chartered church.). At the conference I was an official observer, with a voice, but without vote. In the future, all delegates will have a vote. Each delegate will represent one hundred members or a portion of 100 if the church is smaller. This means that even the smallest church will have a voting delegate.

All of the elders standing for re-election were elected.

I had an opportunity to sing in the Conference Choir, and attended several workshops, including the Sexuality and Spirituality and Spiritual Gifts workshop.

R.P., Delegate

Check it Out

MCC is the largest Gay/Lesbian organization in the world.

NOW (Nat'l Organization for Women) offers insurance for "significant others" (not just physicians, but alternative medicine as well).

Jerry Falwell and his "Moral Majority" are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars across the country to stop Gay/Lesbian rights.

A local printer refused to print our first newsletter because of its content.

A local bank refused to open a joint bank account for a well-known Gay couple.

The Unitarian-Universalist Association openly supports Gay/Lesbian rights.

Mobile Mental Health has actively trained and offers continued support for the Gay Helpline volunteers.

The Gay Helpline is in operation every night from 6 p.m. to midnight for anyone needing someone to talk to -- check it out.

The local bar owners and managers -- Chuck, Miss Betty, Jim, John, Grace and David -- make the printing and mailing of this newsletter possible.

The bar owners and managers donated money and supplies for the kick-off party to celebrate the opening of the Helpline, and that we will be raising funds for the Helpline from time to time, due to their generosity.

...from the pastor

SAUL AND ANOMIE

In the late 1800's, the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, coined the word ANOMIE (without a name) to explain the psychological state of strangers, people at the edge of social movements with enormous change, and people who belonged to subcultures where they were unsure of what the social expectations were within a dominant group. They felt, as James Baldwin must have, like "nobody knows my name." As a matter of fact, in a true state of anomie, it's more like "I don't even know my own name." Durkheim postulated that when a society is experiencing great anomie, the suicide rate goes up. When I read of Saul, the first king of Israel in the Bible, I realized that even in Biblical times, people knew the concept of anomie, even though they didn't know the word.

Saul lived in an anomic time. He was a soldier who had been trained in the old skills of warfare before iron was invented. Suddenly, there was iron. And iron was so strong that all the weapons he had been taught to use were nearly useless. So he learned to use iron, but he was never comfortable with it. Then the people of his area learned about a new God, and all the things he was used to in the old gods were outdated. To add to his problems, Jahweh decided Saul should be king of Israel. Saul wasn't from a royal family (there weren't any royal families in Israel -- he was the first) and he didn't know how a king behaved, he'd never even had a king. But Jahweh had selected him to be king. And still worse, his son gets friendly with this David fellow -- and he knows there's something strange there -- but can that fellow play the harp! He wasn't even permitted to ask the seer what was going to happen, and feel secure, he had to trust this Jahweh God. Saul learned to adapt -- but he was never happy with the new ways, and when things really got tough, he looked to his old gods and went over to see the Witch of Endor to find out what the enemy had in store. That was where he and Jahweh God parted. Poor Saul. He was caught in a world he hardly understood! Everything was changing, nothing seemed to have a center. How he wished for the good old days, when the gods were secure, the military knew what they were doing, the country had the right kind of folk leading it, and people knew how to behave-- knew the rules. Saul was so confused, he hardly knew his own name any more. He was a real case of anomie. And eventually, he did what Durkheim postulated -- he committed suicide.

Can you see some parallels? Many people today feel that sense of anomie. The world has changed so rapidly that people are frightened. They want some sense of the past to hold on to. God, they pray, make it safe again, let me know what to expect! Many Christians are at that point. The world has changed so greatly that they are frightened. Nuclear energy, great social upheaval -- especially within the time of the baby boomers; new forms of government--like Communism and socialism -- scare them. The questioning of old beliefs and the arising of new ideas --all of these together are frightening for people who remember how simple it was when everybody knew what to expect. When the milk train stopped and the old time religion had meaning for everyone -- when everyone was American and your neighbor wasn't a Cambodian Buddhist, a Russian Jew, a Japanese Taoist and your son or daughter hadn't picked up some new religion like the Moonies. When sexuality and sex roles were simple -- men were men and women were girls, and nobody they knew was gay. People out there are scared. And they want the old time religion that had meaning and they want to go back to the time when everybody knew the rules. Well, it's that kind of time, and Jerry Falwell plays upon the fears of those people, and promises them "The Old Time Gospel Hour" and tells them who the enemy is (us), and they follow him, and he profits, and profits, and profits.

But maybe there's more to it than that. Durkheim was also talking about anomie being a condition for strangers and sojourners and for people in subcultures. Maybe there's something there for us, as well. Gay liberation has called us to come out -- it has asked us to change our ways and to trust God to help us find a way to be a new kind of gay people-- strong, and open, and fearless. And

WELCOME

SOOM AND DIGNITY TO BEGIN IN MOBILE

Efforts are being made to organize two new organizations for gay and Lesbian people in Mobile. According to John P., who is spearheading the drive, the Silver Owls of Mobile (SOOM) and a Dignity chapter are looking for persons interested in these groups.

SOOM is a social group for older people, usually over the age of 40, and for younger people who like to be with older gays and Lesbians.

Dignity is an organization for gay Catholics and their friends. The chapter will be part of the national organization that consists of over 117 chapters across the nation.

"Too often gay and Lesbian Catholics feel alienated from their church. Dignity has been successful in being a bridge for these people to rebuild a religious life. Also, Dignity has been effective in creating a dialogue with the church's hierarchy," said John P.

He noted that the SOOM organization is simply an attempt to bring people together in a social context. "Many older gays and Lesbians simply have no social place to go except the bars, where they are usually ignored by younger people. SOOM will be an attempt to provide a congenial group for dinner parties, theater and other outings.

Anyone interested in SOOM or Dignity is asked to contact John at 342-7891, or the HELPLINE at 476-9142.

FIRST NIGHTERS

People interested in going to theater: Involves joining Joe Jefferson Players ($25.00 for 6 plays/musicals) plus other theater presentations. Call HELPLINE for further information - 476-9142.

Club Park Ave
#7 S. Joachim St.
Mobile, AL 36602
JIM CRISS
General Manager
(205) 433-1236
(205) 433-9185

...from the pastor

maybe we, too, are like the Falwell followers. It was so secure in my closet. I was so comfortable hiding. I really don't need these new, frightening ideas of openness and liberation, do I? Oh, yes, you do. You need them for your mental health, you need them for your ability to be a whole person, you need them in a world of change, so that you can change with the world and not be stuck, as Saul was, in fear. Saul clung to the old gods, and could not trust Jahweh God -- and he lost. Most of us try the same thing. We stick to our old gods, our closetedness and our lies. God sees through us -- God knows who we are, and God loves us enough to invite us to be KING. Be all you can be, be the royal person God invites you to be. The alternative for far too many of us has been Saul's solution, suicide; the death of who we really are or can be. The gay community is growing up, and learning that in taking risks there is strength and growth. Don't be a Saul -- be a David. Take the risks -- and grow!

COMING OUT

I've often heard Rev. Marge quote her friend from Providence, Ray LaRiviere, who coined a phrase about gay attitudes, "As long as I can boogie, I'm free." A lot of us started out the same way. If it hadn't been for Gay/Lesbian bars, we would have had nothing. Work, a relationship, maybe -- and then party time at the bars. But heavens, don't ask me to meet your there before the sun went down.

We remain in our closets, doing nothing, hoping and sometimes even praying that no one ever discovers who we "really are." From birth, almost, we are conditioned that to be Gay/Lesbian is a fate worse than death. So we hide and we die a thousand deaths each day. And then one day something wakes us up and we come face to face with years of playing "straight" games. The roles we adopted are unbelievable and staggering, not to mention the toll oppression has taken on our lives.

Sane or insane? The medical world finally realized our sexual preferences had nothing to do with our sanity. Yet, many of our people have difficulty making it through life. Many suffer dependency problems -- sexual, drug, alcohol -- many are emotionally crippled by "oppression sickness." They really don't remain sane in world that tries to crush them.

To many of you out there, "coming out" would be insane. For many it would be. The greatest day of my life, however, was when I became insane. Oh, I'd already come out to some very selected "straight" friends, having carefully tested the waters before ever diving. Heck, they already knew who I was anyway.

Things started changing the day I walked into the new MCC. Sweat poured down my back, fear gripped every part of my body. I made myself sit in the second pew from the front, another bold move for me. I looked behind me, and came face to face with an older "straight couple." I muttered some weird excuse (to whom I still don't know) and got up to leave. But I didn't.

I made it through the daylight. I made it through the service in God's house. I was introduced to the older couple and lived. Last week at Bruno's I happened to notice my attire and chuckled to myself. My MCC teeshirt looked quite nice! A couple of people gave me knowing smiles, but most of the shoppers paid no attention to me. Most of them, if they knew what an MCC was wouldn't have cared anyway. Most of your professional associates, your families, your straight friends probably know who you are right now. Some may not want the confrontation of being told, but many would welcome your openness and applaud your courage and honesty.

For years, a small minority ran my life. Now I'm in charge. IT FEELS GOOD!!!

October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
UU WORSHIP 10:30 AM ev. every Sunday	NOVEMBER 1st ROCKY HORROR SHOW AT ESQUIRE WITH OSTRIS	1	2 RAP; Who's on Top-- Power in Relationships.	3		ER'S ANNIVERSARY
6 MCC WORSHIP 7:00 P.M. 5:30 New Memb.	7	8	9 RAP: Peer Pressure - Handling your friends.	10	11	12 COLUMBUS DAY
13 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 3:00Shrimp Boil at DAVID'sII UU VOLLEYBALL	14 COLUMBUS DAY OBSERVED	15	16 RAP Cross-Generational Relationships	17	18 UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS 2-DAY WORKSHOP	19 "The Haunting Church"
20 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 5:30 New Memb	21	22	23 RAP HOLDING HANDS Making a political statement.	24	25	26
27 MCC WORSHIP-7pm UU VOLLEYBALL 5:30 New Memb MOTHER-IN-LAW DAY	28	29	30 RAP HOMOPHOBIA -- THEIRS AND OURS	31 HOOKER'S BALL ALL THE BARS HALLOWEEN		

CLASSIFIED ADS

Weekend Sketch Group -- interested? Call the HELPLINE for information.

WRITERS GROUP -- Meet once a month for social contact and constructive criticism of members' work. Bring a piece of writing for criticism, and ke p a log of the number of hours spent writing. Contact Shirley L. at the HELPLINE.

BIKERS (no, silly, not that kind!) are being sought for a bike riding group. Ride, bring lunch and picnic-- weather will be perfect soon.

Halloween

FOR SALE: SCM Electric Typewriter, ribbon spool. Best offer. Evenings 8-10. 342-7891, ask for John.

PLUMBING - Indoors, reasonable rates. Expert service. Call evenings after 6, or Mondays, 476-5171, as for Harry.

CLEANING-INTERIOR PAINTING, WALLPAPER. Organize your precious collectibles?? Excellent references in both communities. 476-9142, ask for Shirley.

BOWLING LEAGUE -- Members of MCC want to form a bowling team to hopefully compete against other gay groups (bars, etc.). At least six teams are needed. Call the HELPLINE if you are interested.

SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.
433-9141

SUN. - THURS. 10 A. M. - 2 A. M.
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS

ESQUIRE
BAR & LOUNGE

— Phone 433-9175 —
Mon.-Fri. 9:30 a.m. Till
Sat. 9:30 a.m.-2a.m.
13 South Joachim St. Mobile, Ala.

The Metropolitan Community Church
AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD — MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA
Pastor

(205) 476-9142

Volume 1, No. 2 — October 1985

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART...

The veil of distaste and misconceptions surrounding the gay segment of the population is nowhere better illustrated than in the film, "God, Gays and the Gospel," a no-nonsense look at the rapid rise of the Metropolitan Community Church.

One of the most poignant plights of gay people in today's world is the denial of their right to worship by most of the traditional organized religions. Almost without exception the Christian faith has taken upon itself the right to refuse gays a part in the Family of God.

The long struggle by MCC founder Rev. Troy Perry to establish a faith, not just for gays but for anyone, is the focus of the film. In concise, to the point terms, the production addresses the sheer magnitude of the work being done and the forward strides being made by Perry and his legion of pastors and congregations.

Since its founding in 1969, MCC has endured everything from ridicule to bombings to burned-out church sanctuaries. More than 17 years later, Perry and his followers have forged a recognized, respected faith wherein all are welcomed. It is a tribute to the ecumenical and accepting nature of this church that 20 per cent of its members are non-gay. It is a true illustration of the overused, misused term, "real Christian people."

Perry, a transplanted Floridian, excluded from the church of his childhood, spent years berating himself as "unacceptable." In the end, he determined that there is no reason -- save for human bigotry and Biblical misinterpretation -- for gays to be denied a right to their faith. Nowhere in the Bible, he points out, is there condemnation of homosexuality as it is understood today. In one of his most moving sermons, he presents a stunning point: "If AIDS is God's "gift" to the homosexual, then is toxic shock syndrome God's "gift" to women for being female? ...or is Legionnaires' Disease God's "gift" to the American Legion for being too patriotic?

From the perspective of a "straight," the message of "God, Gays, and the Gospel" is very much to the point: No human deserves the right to tell another he or she will never be acceptable in the eyes of God. Moreover, it should be remembered that Perry et al are not working for immediate and total social acceptance, but for establishment of a climate of cooperation and understanding.

No "straight" who professes a concern for human rights should let gays bear this struggle alone.

(Note: N.J.Green is MCC at Mobile's "token straight," our assistant organist. Thank God for our "straight" friends.)

MCC MEMBERS-ATTENTION!

REMINDER

Congregational Meeting, October 27, following worship service. Election of officers, other important business, including coming into agreement with GSS changes.

FROM THE EDITOR--

Our first issue was a roaring success, so the community tells us. We personally wish to thank the bar owners and managers for making the newsletter a reality, rather than the "dream" so many of us have talked about for the last couple of years. At last we have a way to communicate ideas among gays in Mobile. We also want to apologize to Chuck at Troopers for omitting a news item last month. Thanks for bearing with us and our mistakes -- we'll get it right with practice. A word of thanks to all of you out there from the small group at MCC. Because of you the newsletter will continue to grow, to increase our awareness and to solidify the community.

To date we have received the names "Revelations," "Mobile Pride News," and "Genesis." Don't be bashful. Send or call in your suggestion.

We stated our purpose last month, "to offer a news source for the entire community." We are happy to report that this issue, our second, has accomplished that goal. Sincere applause to each organization and business for your participation. We are open to your suggestions and your criticism. Our new feature, "Community Profile" has already been designated for the November issue. Send in the name of someone you wish to acknowledge in a future issue.

Our editorial policy requires that a name and address be submitted along with newscopy. Your name and address will not be printed without your written consent, but we must have this information to protect the legal position of the church. Please drop editorial copy or editorial replies at the church or mail them to: MCC Newsletter, P.O. Box 8524, Mobile, Ala. 36608. The deadline for all copy is the Third Monday of the Month.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

NEWS FROM THE LESBIAN TASK FORCE OF NOW

Two important pieces of legislation are going to be brought to Congress in this year, NOW has informed us. One, is H.R. 230, the Federal Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights Legislation which is spearheaded by Representative Ted Weiss of Brooklyn, N.Y. and carries the endorsement of 44 other representatives, including Rep. Gerry Studds of Massachusetts, an openly gay legislator. The bill primarily calls for the insertion of the words, "affexional or sexual orientation," throughout the Civil Rights Act of 1964, following the word "color," and in other legislation, like the Equal opportunity Act, where it is inserted after "sex." thus identifying gay and Lesbian discrimination as equal to that against people of color and as pervasive as sexism. Interestingly, the same act speaks against acts of intimidation or violence against gays and Lesbians in the same passage that it speaks about violence against religious groups.

The other piece of legislation is the now infamous McCarran-Walter act, which prohibits certain people from entering the United States because of political or sexual orientation. Farley Mowat, the Canadian author of such dangerous books as the environmental study, "Never Cry Wolf," and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Colombia's Nobel Prize Winning novelist, were both excluded -- and refused to be singled out as special cases -- under this Act. Gay men and women can be refused entry into the U.S. -- and have been -- by the terms of the McCarran Act. It is important for the McCarran Act to not include gays and Lesbians under the heading of those accused of "moral turpitude."

The legislation above is entitled Immigration Exclusion and Deportation Amendments of 1985. The first is HR 230. Your congressional representative will vote on both of these. Make your wishes known. One letter -- one letter -- can make the difference, because very few letters on any subject are received from constituents, and as many as five or six letters can seem like an avalanche. If you are interested in how to write to Congress, call the HELPLINE for a copy of MCC's booklet, Writing to Congress, from MCC's Department of Christian Social Action.

Bulletin Board

ORDER OF OSIRIS - "The Rocky Horror Show" Friday and Saturday, November 1 and 2, Presented by the Order of Osiris and the Esquire House -- at the Esquire House. $5.00 admission. See an Osiris member or your bartender for tickets.

Less than 140 days to Osiris' 5th Anniversary Mardi Gras Ball, February 7, 1986.

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - Study series for 4 weeks on Men's Life and Men's Issues. Call the UU's at 342-6834 for information and starting date (near the end of the month.)

2-day Workshop -- The Haunting Church October 18 and 19 at the UU Fellowship 6345 Old Shell Road.

Volleyball -- every 2nd and 4th Sunday, at 2 P.M. at the UU's, weather permitting.

better gay than grumpy

TROOPERS - Shuffleboard tournaments every Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. Pool tournaments every Thursday at 8:30. Some of the best popcorn in Mobile.

CORRAL - Pool tournament every Monday at 9:00 p.m. Please watch for announcements of upcoming Halloween events.

CPA - Costume contest at midnight in conjunction with Hooker's Ball.

Free buffet every Sunday at 9:30 p.m.

Watch for "Name that Tune" to begin early NOvember on Sunday evenings.

DAVID'S II - Special Guest, Halloween Eve through Saturday, Carmen Del Rio.

First Sunday of October begins David's free buffet from 3-9 p.m., and the Tea Dance.

Shrimp boil, Sunday October 13th, from 3 til? To help raise funds for MCC's HELPLINE and newsletter. $3.00 cover, includes all the boiled shrimp you can eat, along with other goodies.

ESQUIRE - Rocky Horror Show November 1 and 2 at 9:30 p.m. Get your tickets from Esquire or any Osiris member. $5.00 per ticket.

PROFILE

Did you enjoy Mobile's Gay Pride 85? Our first profile is, Harry, organizer and leader of Pride 85. Harry was the catalyst that brought together the various elements of the community. It wasn't his first time out, certainly not his first effort for our benefit. Fifteen years in the Mobile area has seen Harry speaking at the University of South Alabama and Springhill College on Gay/Lesbian issues. He was one of the strong leaders of the old Gulf Alliance for Equality as well.

When Harry isn't working on our behalf, he enjoys meeting the public in his retail profession. While there's still daylight after a hard day at work, you might see him out bicycling or running, or on Sundays offering his talents at the Unitarian-Universalists' worship and fellowship. "My religion," Harry said, has given me a lot more direction in my life, and a greater sense of freedom to allow my own beliefs to evolve."

Harry offered the following thoughts about and reflections on Gay Pride'85: '85 was very successfull considering the late starting date for planning. '84, our first Gay Pride Activity, made '85 much easier to put together. Adding more organizations -- the UU's and MCC -- added much to '85's success. Without Danni B. '85 would not have come toether. A SPECIAL THANKS TO HER.

For 1986 Gay Pride, Harry foresees greatness. "For once, we are starting off with some money, $186.00, thanks to the bars. We will begin planning at a much earlier date, offering the same type of activities, with more variety, however. We will certainly push for more publicity and participation from all the organizations. We want Gay Pride to be financially self-supporting, and there's no reason it shouldn't be if we all work at it."

When asked what he would change if given the right opportunity, Harry offered the following: "I'd like to see more open Gay/Lesbian businesses, organizations, and individuals come out, and a greater media presence for the community. However, the fear of coming out is still our greatest obstacle. Most of us, including me, still face job discrimination, neighborhood harassment, and the possible loss of our families or their strong disapproval."

In a larger context, Harry went on, "Much of our recent publicity has been derogatory. I feel that the Moral Majority uses us as their biggest fundraiser, particularly now that AIDS has come to the forefront of the news media."

Harry is one of the strongest and most open figures in our Mobile Gay Community, and with his support and leadership, gay Mobile should reach the goals which he is helping us set.

SOCIETY LOUNGE -- Beginning in October, the first weekend each month, Miss Betty will be presenting weekend shows at 10 and 12 midnight. No cover.

SOMETHING TO SELL, SERVICE TO OFFER?? Call 476-9142 for rates and deadlines. Please NO PERSONALS, except Birthday, Anniversary, Thank You's.

TROOPERS
215 Conti Street
438-9139
HOURS: 11 a.m.-3 a.m.

CORRAL
54 So. Conception
433-9258
Weekdays - Noon Till
Weekends - 24 hours

THERE IS NO LONGER AN EXCUSE FOR SPREADING AIDS

Right now in the gay community, we're faced with some extremely difficult decisions because of AIDS -- sexual decisions affecting our lives and life-styles. We Gaymen have come up with a lot of excuses for avoiding the issue.

We all know that safer sex can reduce the risk of contracting and spreading AIDS. Some practices are more effective than others; some we have questions about.

We all need to make informed decisions, not excuses. You'll probably agree that none of the following excuses justify the pread of AIDS in our community:

"WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And it's the community's. Everyone must take a concerned and active role if we're going to stop the spread of this disease.

Here's another common excuse: "If someone doesn't ask me to practice safer sex, I figure that's his decision and I respect it."

Why? Aren't you concerned? Perhaps your partner is just as uncomfortable in raising the issue as you are.

"WHOSE LIFE IS IT, ANYWAY?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And the community's. The excuse, "It's my life," is only partly true. The life of your partner and the well-being of the community are also at stake.

AIDS is not just a physical problem. There are political, social, and economic effects as well. There is already evidence that social freedoms may be restricted because of AIDS. AIDS can be used as an excuse for anti-Gay action and legislation.

Making decisions about sexual practices is difficult. Sticking to those decisions is even more difficult. But this isn't a moral issue; it's a matter of life and death.

"CHANGING MY SEX LIFE ISN"T A CURE FOR AIDS."

That's true. There is no cure or vaccine. And researchers think they are years away from developing one. Safer sexual practices are our best means right now of reducing our risk and stopping the spread of AIDS.

"CHANGE? NOBODY ELSE IS DOING IT!"

The fact is that a major research project conducted by the AIDS Foundation among San Francisco Gaymen revealed that two-thirds of the Gay community is making a serious effort to reduce their risk by practicing safer sex. Two-thirds!

Talk about it. Even though its a difficult subject for everyone, chances are your partner is just as concerned as you are and would probably welcome a chance to discuss it.

Let's stop making excuses. Let's stop the spread of AIDS.

Reprinted from ACTS 29, Newsletter of

Rectal gonorrhea has declined 86% since the AIDS scare -- people are aware of risks and are changing their sexual habits. Safe sex works.

Bulletin Board

HOOKER'S BALL - HALLOWEEN NIGHT -- Presented by all your favorite bars and the Order of Osiris. Prizes for costumes, all bars are involved, begins 7:00 p.m. Hallowe'en night, costumes are invited, and you are especially requested to attend this celebration of what is turning into the second most exciting activity of the year.

Birthdays

HAPPY BIRTHDAY - Queen Richard, Oct.9, from all the folks at Esquire House.

Label JARS Not PEOPLE

ANNIVERSARY

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY - Oct. 5 to Chuck at Troopers on their 2nd Year of fun and support of the community.

HAPPY BELATED ANNIVERSARY TO CPA - We were not notified in time for publication last month, but CPA celebrated their 2nd anniversary on Sept. 27th. Great going, guys!

476-9142

Gay

Help-line

We met at

DAVID'S II

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985

from the fellowship

"FREE TO BE"

12TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF MCC

Sacramento, California. The conference got off to an exciting start. Rev. Elders Freda Smith and Nancy Wilson both preached Monday. I especially enjoyed hearing them. The film, "God, Gays, and the Gospel" was also shown for the first time on Monday.

The film, a documentary telling about MCC and what it means, cost about $100,000 to make. Many unique aspects of MCC were brought out. The fact that MCC has membrers from every religious background and the highest proportion of women ministers were particularly interesting.

In the business meetings, a great deal was accomplished in the first few days. The Government Structures and Systems proposal was accepted with some minor amendments. Two changes will have the most immediate impact. One is the adoption of the General Council as the governing body of MCC. The General Council will be composed of the Board of Directors and the District Coordinators, thus giving total regional representation at the highest MCC level. The other change is that there will be only commissioned and chartered churches (instead of the three tier system as previously: Study group, mission, chartered church.). At the conference I was an official observer, with a voice, but without vote. In the future, all delegates will have a vote. Each delegate will represent one hundred members or a portion of 100 if the church is smaller. This means that even the smallest church will have a voting delegate.

All of the elders standing for re-election were elected.

I had an opportunity to sing in the Conference Choir, and attended several workshops, including the Sexuality and Spirituality and Spiritual Gifts workshop.

R.P., Delegate

Check it Out

MCC is the largest Gay/Lesbian organization in the world.

NOW (Nat'l Organization for Women) offers insurance for "significant others" (not just physicians, but alternative medicine as well).

Jerry Falwell and his "Moral Majority" are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars across the country to stop Gay/Lesbian rights.

A local printer refused to print our first newsletter because of its content.

A local bank refused to open a joint bank account for a well-known Gay couple.

The Unitarian-Universalist Association openly supports Gay/Lesbian rights.

Mobile Mental Health has actively trained and offers continued support for the Gay Helpline volunteers.

The Gay Helpline is in operation every night from 6 p.m. to midnight for anyone needing someone to talk to -- check it out.

The local bar owners and managers -- Chuck, Miss Betty, Jim, John, Grace and David -- make the printing and mailing of this newsletter possible.

The bar owners and managers donated money and supplies for the kick-off party to celebrate the opening of the Helpline, and that we will be raising funds for the Helpline from time to time, due to their generosity.

...from the pastor

SAUL AND ANOMIE

In the late 1800's, the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, coined the word ANOMIE (without a name) to explain the psychological state of strangers, people at the edge of social movements with enormous change, and people who belonged to subcultures where they were unsure of what the social expectations were within a dominant group. They felt, as James Baldwin must have, like "nobody knows my name." As a matter of fact, in a true state of anomie, it's more like "I don't even know my own name." Durkheim postulated that when a society is experiencing great anomie, the suicide rate goes up. When I read of Saul, the first king of Israel in the Bible, I realized that even in Biblical times, people knew the concept of anomie, even though they didn't know the word.

Saul lived in an anomic time. He was a soldier who had been trained in the old skills of warfare before iron was invented. Suddenly, there was iron. And iron was so strong that all the weapons he had been taught to use were nearly useless. So he learned to use iron, but he was never comfortable with it. Then the people of his area learned about a new God, and all the things he was used to in the old gods were outdated. To add to his problems, Jahweh decided Saul should be king of Israel. Saul wasn't from a royal family (there weren't any royal families in Israel -- he was the first) and he didn't know how a king behaved, he'd never even had a king. But Jahweh had selected him to be king. And still worse, his son gets friendly with this David fellow -- and he knows there's something strange there -- but can that fellow play the harp! He wasn't even permitted to ask the seer what was going to happen, and feel secure, he had to trust this Jahweh God. Saul learned to adapt -- but he was never happy with the new ways, and when things really got tough, he looked to his old gods and went over to see the Witch of Endor to find out what the enemy had in store. That was where he and Jahweh God parted. Poor Saul. He was caught in a world he hardly understood! Everything was changing, nothing seemed to have a center. How he wished for the good old days, when the gods were secure, the military knew what they were doing, the country had the right kind of folk leading it, and people knew how to behave-- knew the rules. Saul was so confused, he hardly knew his own name any more. He was a real case of anomie. And eventually, he did what Durkheim postulated -- he committed suicide.

Can you see some parallels? Many people today feel that sense of anomie. The world has changed so rapidly that people are frightened. They want some sense of the past to hold on to. God, they pray, make it safe again, let me know what to expect! Many Christians are at that point. The world has changed so greatly that they are frightened. Nuclear energy, great social upheaval -- especially within the time of the baby boomers; new forms of government--like Communism and socialism -- scare them. The questioning of old beliefs and the arising of new ideas --all of these together are frightening for people who remember how simple it was when everybody knew what to expect. When the milk train stopped and the old time religion had meaning for everyone -- when everyone was American and your neighbor wasn't a Cambodian Buddhist, a Russian Jew, a Japanese Taoist and your son or daughter hadn't picked up some new religion like the Moonies. When sexuality and sex roles were simple -- men were men and women were girls, and nobody they knew was gay. People out there are scared. And they want the old time religion that had meaning and they want to go back to the time when everybody knew the rules. Well, it's that kind of time, and Jerry Falwell plays upon the fears of those people, and promises them "The Old Time Gospel Hour" and tells them who the enemy is (us), and they follow him, and he profits, and profits, and profits.

But maybe there's more to it than that. Durkheim was also talking about anomie being a condition for strangers and sojourners and for people in subcultures. Maybe there's something there for us, as well. Gay liberation has called us to come out -- it has asked us to change our ways and to trust God to help us find a way to be a new kind of gay people-- strong, and open, and fearless. And

WELCOME

SOOM AND DIGNITY TO BEGIN IN MOBILE

Efforts are being made to organize two new organizations for gay and Lesbian people in Mobile. According to John P., who is spearheading the drive, the Silver Owls of Mobile (SOOM) and a Dignity chapter are looking for persons interested in these groups.

SOOM is a social group for older people, usually over the age of 40, and for younger people who like to be with older gays and Lesbians.

Dignity is an organization for gay Catholics and their friends. The chapter will be part of the national organization that consists of over 117 chapters across the nation.

"Too often gay and Lesbian Catholics feel alienated from their church. Dignity has been successful in being a bridge for these people to rebuild a religious life. Also, Dignity has been effective in creating a dialogue with the church's hierarchy," said John P.

He noted that the SOOM organization is simply an attempt to bring people together in a social context. "Many older gays and Lesbians simply have no social place to go except the bars, where they are usually ignored by younger people. SOOM will be an attempt to provide a congenial group for dinner parties, theater and other outings.

Anyone interested in SOOM or Dignity is asked to contact John at 342-7891, or the HELPLINE at 476-9142.

FIRST NIGHTERS

People interested in going to theater: Involves joining Joe Jefferson Players ($25.00 for 6 plays/musicals) plus other theater presentations. Call HELPLINE for further information - 476-9142.

...from the pastor

maybe we, too, are like the Falwell followers. It was so secure in my closet. I was so comfortable hiding. I really don't need these new, frightening ideas of openness and liberation, do I? Oh, yes, you do. You need them for your mental health, you need them for your ability to be a whole person, you need them in a world of change, so that you can change with the world and not be stuck, as Saul was, in fear. Saul clung to the old gods, and could not trust Jahweh God -- and he lost. Most of us try the same thing. We stick to our old gods, our closetedness and our lies. God sees through us -- God knows who we are, and God loves us enough to invite us to be KING. Be all you can be, be the royal person God invites you to be. The alternative for far too many of us has been Saul's solution, suicide; the death of who we really are or can be. The gay community is growing up, and learning that in taking risks there is strength and growth. Don't be a Saul -- be a David. Take the risks -- and grow!

COMING OUT

I've often heard Rev. Marge quote her friend from Providence, Ray LaRiviere, who coined a phrase about gay attitudes, "As long as I can boogie, I'm free." A lot of us started out the same way. If it hadn't been for Gay/Lesbian bars, we would have had nothing. Work, a relationship, maybe -- and then party time at the bars. But heavens, don't ask me to meet your there before the sun went down.

We remain in our closets, doing nothing, hoping and sometimes even praying that no one ever discovers who we "really are." From birth, almost, we are conditioned that to be Gay/Lesbian is a fate worse than death. So we hide and we die a thousand deaths each day. And then one day something wakes us up and we come face to face with years of playing "straight" games. The roles we adopted are unbelievable and staggering, not to mention the toll oppression has taken on our lives.

Sane or insane? The medical world finally realized our sexual preferences had nothing to do with our sanity. Yet, many of our people have difficulty making it through life. Many suffer dependency problems -- sexual, drug, alcohol -- many are emotionally crippled by "oppression sickness." They really don't remain sane in world that tries to crush them.

To many of you out there, "coming out" would be insane. For many it would be. The greatest day of my life, however, was when I became insane. Oh, I'd already come out to some very selected "straight" friends, having carefully tested the waters before ever diving. Heck, they already knew who I was anyway.

Things started changing the day I walked into the new MCC. Sweat poured down my back, fear gripped every part of my body. I made myself sit in the second pew from the front, another bold move for me. I looked behind me, and came face to face with an older "straight couple." I muttered some weird excuse (to whom I still don't know) and got up to leave. But I didn't.

I made it through the daylight. I made it through the service in God's house. I was introduced to the older couple and lived. Last week at Bruno's I happened to notice my attire and chuckled to myself. My MCC teeshirt looked quite nice! A couple of people gave me knowing smiles, but most of the shoppers paid no attention to me. Most of them, if they knew what an MCC was wouldn't have cared anyway. Most of your professional associates, your families, your straight friends probably know who you are right now. Some may not want the confrontation of being told, but many would welcome your openness and applaud your courage and honesty.

For years, a small minority ran my life. Now I'm in charge. IT FEELS GOOD!!!

October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
MCC WORSHIP 10:30 AM ev. every Sunday	NOVEMBER 1st ROCKY HORROR SHOW AT ESQUIRE WITH OSIRIS	1	2 RAP; What's on Top-- Power in Relationships.	3		FR'S ANNIVERSARY
6 MCC WORSHIP 7:00 P.M. 5:30 New Memb	7	8	9 RAP: Peer Pressure - Handling your friends.	10	11	12 COLUMBUS DAY
13 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 3:00Shrimp Boil at DAVID'sII VOLLEYBALL	14 COLUMBUS DAY OBSERVED	15	16 RAP Cross-Generational Relationships	17	18 UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS 2-DAY WORKSHOP	19 "The Haunting Church"
20 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 5:30 New Memb	21	22	23 RAP HOLDING HANDS Making a political statement.	24	25	26
27 MCC WORSHIP-7pm UU VOLLEYBALL 5:30 New Memb MOTHER-IN-LAW DAY	28	29	30 RAP HOMOPHOBIA -- THEIRS AND OURS	31 HOOKER'S BALL ALL THE BARS HALLOWEEN	SEPTEMBER	NOVEMBER

CLASSIFIED ADS

Weekend Sketch Group -- interested? Call the HELPLINE for information.

WRITERS GROUP -- Meet once a month for social contact and constructive criticism of members' work. Bring a piece of writing for criticism, and ke p a log of the number of hours spent wri ting. Contact Shirley L. at the HELPLINE.

BIKERS (no, silly, not that kind!) are being sought for a bike riding group. Ride, bring lunch and picnic-- weather will be perfect soon.

Halloween

FOR SALE: SCM Electric Typewriter, ribbon spool. Best offer. Evenings 8-10. 342-7891, ask for John.

PLUMBING - Indoors, reasonable rates. Expert service. Call evenings after 6, or Mondays, 476-5171, as for Harry.

CLEANING-INTERIOR PAINTING, WALLPAPER. Organize your precious collectibles?? Excellent references in both communities. 476-9142, ask for Shirley.

BOWLING LEAGUE -- Members of MCC want to form a bowling team to hopefully compete against other gay groups (bars, etc.). At least six teams are needed. Call the HELPLINE if you are interested.

SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.
433-9141

SUN. - THURS. 10 A. M. - 2 A.M.
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS

ESQUIRE
BAR & LOUNGE

- Phone 433-9175 -
Mon.-Fri. 9:30 a.m. Till
Sat. 9:30 a.m.-2a.m.
13 South Joachim St. Mobile, Ala.

The Metropolitan Community Church
AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD — MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA
Pastor — (205) 476-9142

Volume 1, No. 2 — October 1985

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART...

The veil of distaste and misconceptions surrounding the gay segment of the population is nowhere better illustrated than in the film, "God, Gays and the Gospel," a no-nonsense look at the rapid rise of the Metropolitan Community Church.

One of the most poignant plights of gay people in today's world is the denial of their right to worship by most of the traditional organized religions. Almost without exception the Christian faith has taken upon itself the right to refuse gays a part in the Family of God.

The long struggle by MCC founder Rev. Troy Perry to establish a faith, not just for gays but for anyone, is the focus of the film. In concise, to the point terms, the production addresses the sheer magnitude of the work being done and the forward strides being made by Perry and his legion of pastors and congregations.

Since its founding in 1969, MCC has endured everything from ridicule to bombings to burned-out church sanctuaries. More than 17 years later, Perry and his followers have forged a recognized, respected faith wherein all are welcomed. It is a tribute to the ecumenical and accepting nature of this church that 20 per cent of its members are non-gay. It is a true illustration of the overused, misused term, "real Christian people."

Perry, a transplanted Floridian, excluded from the church of his childhood, spent years berating himself as "unacceptable." In the end, he determined that there is no reason -- save for human bigotry and Biblical misinterpretation -- for gays to be denied a right to their faith. Nowhere in the Bible, he points out, is there condemnation of homosexuality as it is understood today. In one of his most moving sermons, he presents a stunning point: "If AIDS is God's "gift" to the homosexual, then is toxic shock syndrome God's "gift" to women for being female? ...or is Legionnaires' Disease God's "gift" to the American Legion for being too patriotic?

From the perspective of a "straight," the message of "God, Gays, and the Gospel" is very much to the point: No human deserves the right to tell another he or she will never be acceptable in the eyes of God. Moreover, it should be remembered that Perry et al are not working for immediate and total social acceptance, but for establishment of a climate of cooperation and understanding.

No "straight" who professes a concern for human rights should let gays bear this struggle alone.

(Note: N.J.Green is MCC at Mobile's "token straight," our assistant organist. Thank God for our "straight" friends.)

REMINDER

MCC MEMBERS-ATTENTION!
Congregational Meeting, October 27, following worship service. Election of officers, other important business, including coming into agreement with GSS changes.

FROM THE EDITOR--

Our first issue was a roaring success, so the community tells us. We personally wish to thank the bar owners and managers for making the newsletter a reality, rather than the "dream" so many of us have talked about for the last couple of years. At last we have a way to communicate ideas among gays in Mobile. We also want to apologize to Chuck at Troopers for omitting a news item last month. Thanks for bearing with us and our mistakes -- we'll get it right with practice. A word of thanks to all of you out there from the small group at MCC. Because of you the newsletter will continue to grow, to increase our awareness and to solidify the community.

To date we have received the names "Revelations," "Mobile Pride News," and "Genesis." Don't be bashful. Send or call in your suggestion.

We stated our purpose last month, "to offer a news source for the entire community." We are happy to report that this issue, our second, has accomplished that goal. Sincere applause to each organization and business for your participation. We are open to your suggestions and your criticism. Our new feature, "Community Profile" has already been designated for the November issue. Send in the name of someone you wish to acknowledge in a future issue.

Our editorial policy requires that a name and address be submitted along with newscopy. Your name and address will not be printed without your written consent, but we must have this information to protect the legal position of the church. Please drop editorial copy or editorial replies at the church or mail them to: MCC Newsletter, P.O. Box 8524, Mobile, Ala. 36608. The deadline for all copy is the Third Monday of the Month.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

NEWS FROM THE LESBIAN TASK FORCE OF NOW

Two important pieces of legislation are going to be brought to Congress in this year, NOW has informed us. One, is H.R. 230, the Federal Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights Legislation which is spearheaded by Representative Ted Weiss of Brooklyn, N.Y. and carries the endorsement of 44 other representatives, including Rep. Gerry Studds of Massachusetts, an openly gay legislator. The bill primarily calls for the insertion of the words, "affexional or sexual orientation," throughout the Civil Rights Act of 1964, following the word "color," and in other legislation, like the Equal opportunity Act, where it is inserted after "sex." thus identifying gay and Lesbian discrimination as equal to that against people of color and as pervasive as sexism. Interestingly, the same act speaks against acts of intimidation or violence against gays and Lesbians in the same passage that it speaks about violence against religious groups.

The other piece of legislation is the now infamous McCarran-Walter act, which prohibits certain people from entering the United States because of political or sexual orientation. Farley Mowat, the Canadian author of such dangerous books as the environmental study, "Never Cry Wolf," and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Colombia's Nobel Prize Winning novelist, were both excluded -- and refused to be singled out as special cases -- under this Act. Gay men and women can be refused entry into the U.S. -- and have been -- by the terms of the McCarran Act. It is important for the McCarran Act to not include gays and Lesbians under the heading of those accused of "moral turpitude."

The legislation above is entitled Immigration Exclusion and Deportation Amendments of 1985. The first is HR 230. Your congressional representative will vote on both of these. Make your wishes known. One letter -- one letter -- can make the difference, because very few letters on any subject are received from constituents, and as many as five or six letters can seem like an avalanche. If you are interested in how to write to Congress, call the HELPLINE for a copy of MCC's booklet, Writing to Congress, from MCC's Department of Christian Social Action.

Bulletin Board

ORDER OF OSIRIS - "The Rocky Horror Show" Friday and Saturday, November 1 and 2, Presented by the Order of Osiris and the Esquire House -- at the Esquire House. $5.00 admission. See an Osiris member or your bartender for tickets.

Less than 140 days to Osiris' 5th Anniversary Mardi Gras Ball, February 7, 1986.

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - Study series for 4 weeks on Men's Life and Men's Issues. Call the UU's at 342-6834 for information and starting date (near the end of the month.)

2-day Workshop -- The Haunting Church October 18 and 19 at the UU Fellowship 6345 Old Shell Road.

Volleyball -- every 2nd and 4th Sunday, at 2 P.M. at the UU's, weather permitting.

better gay than grumpy

TROOPERS - Shuffleboard tournaments every Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. Pool tournaments every Thursday at 8:30. Some of the best popcorn in Mobile.

CORRAL - Pool tournament every Monday at 9:00 p.m. Please watch for announcements of upcoming Halloween events.

CPA - Costume contest at midnight in conjunction with Hooker's Ball.

Free buffet every Sunday at 9:30 p.m.

Watch for "Name that Tune" to begin early NOvember on Sunday evenings.

DAVID'S II - Special Guest, Halloween Eve through Saturday, Carmen Del Rio.

First Sunday of October begins David's free buffet from 3-9 p.m., and the Tea Dance.

Shrimp boil, Sunday October 13th, from 3 til? To help raise funds for MCC's HELPLINE and newsletter. $3.00 cover, includes all the boiled shrimp you can eat, along with other goodies.

ESQUIRE - Rocky Horror Show November 1 and 2 at 9:30 p.m. Get your tickets from Esquire or any Osiris member. $5.00 per ticket.

PROFILE

Did you enjoy Mobile's Gay Pride 85? Our first profile is, Harry, organizer and leader of Pride 85. Harry was the catalyst that brought together the various elements of the community. It wasn't his first time out, certainly not his first effort for our benefit. Fifteen years in the Mobile area has seen Harry speaking at the University of South Alabama and Springhill College on Gay/Lesbian issues. He was one of the strong leaders of the old Gulf Alliance for Equality as well.

When Harry isn't working on our behalf, he enjoys meeting the public in his retail profession. While there's still daylight after a hard day at work, you might see him out bicycling or running, or on Sundays offering his talents at the Unitarian-Universalists' worship and fellowship. "My religion," Harry said, has given me a lot more direction in my life, and a greater sense of freedom to allow my own beliefs to evolve."

Harry offered the following thoughts about and reflections on Gay Pride'85: '85 was very successfull considering the late starting date for planning. '84, our first Gay Pride Activity, made '85 much easier to put together. Adding more organizations -- the UU's and MCC -- added much to '85's success. Without Danni B. '85 would not have come toether. A SPECIAL THANKS TO HER.

For 1986 Gay Pride, Harry foresees greatness. "For once, we are starting off with some money, $186.00, thanks to the bars. We will begin planning at a much earlier date, offering the same type of activities, with more variety, however. We will certainly push for more publicity and participation from all the organizations. We want Gay Pride to be financially self-supporting, and there's no reason it shouldn't be if we all work at it."

When asked what he would change if given the right opportunity, Harry offered the following: "I'd like to see more open Gay/Lesbian businesses, organizations, and individuals come out, and a greater media presence for the community. However, the fear of coming out is still our greatest obstacle. Most of us, including me, still face job discrimination, neighborhood harassment, and the possible loss of our families or their strong disapproval."

In a larger context, Harry went on, "Much of our recent publicity has been derogatory. I feel that the Moral Majority uses us as their biggest fundraiser, particularly now that AIDS has come to the forefront of the news media."

Harry is one of the strongest and most open figures in our Mobile Gay Community, and with his support and leadership, gay Mobile should reach the goals which he is helping us set.

SOCIETY LOUNGE - Beginning in October, the first weekend each month, Miss Betty will be presenting weekend shows at 10 and 12 midnight. No cover.

SOMETHING TO SELL, SERVICE TO OFFER?? Call 476-9142 for rates and deadlines. Please NO PERSONALS, except Birthday, Anniversary, Thank You's.

TROOPERS
215 Conti Street
438-9139
HOURS: 11 a.m.-3 a.m.

CORRAL
54 So. Conception
433-9258
Weekdays - Noon Till
Weekends - 24 hours

THERE IS NO LONGER AN EXCUSE FOR SPREADING AIDS

Right now in the gay community, we're faced with some extremely difficult decisions because of AIDS -- sexual decisions affecting our lives and lifestyles. We Gaymen have come up with a lot of excuses for avoiding the issue.

We all know that safer sex can reduce the risk of contracting and spreading AIDS. Some practices are more effective than others; some we have questions about.

We all need to make informed decisions, not excuses. You'll probably agree that none of the following excuses justify the pread of AIDS in our community:

"WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And it's the community's. Everyone must take a concerned and active role if we're going to stop the spread of this disease.

Here's another common excuse: "If someone doesn't ask me to practice safer sex, I figure that's his decision and I respect it."

Why? Aren't you concerned? Perhaps your partner is just as uncomfortable in raising the issue as you are.

"WHOSE LIFE IS IT, ANYWAY?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And the community's. The excuse, "It's my life," is only partly true. The life of your partner and the well-being of the community are also at stake.

AIDS is not just a physical problem. There are political, social, and economic effects as well. There is already evidence that social freedoms may be restricted because of AIDS. AIDS can be used as an excuse for anti-Gay action and legislation.

Making decisions about sexual practices is difficult. Sticking to those decisions is even more difficult. But this isn't a moral issue; it's a matter of life and death.

"CHANGING MY SEX LIFE ISN'T A CURE FOR AIDS."

That's true. There is no cure or vaccine. And researchers think they are years away from developing one. Safer sexual practices are our best means right now of reducing our risk and stopping the spread of AIDS.

"CHANGE? NOBODY ELSE IS DOING IT!"

The fact is that a major research project conducted by the AIDS Foundation among San Francisco Gaymen revealed that two-thirds of the Gay community is making a serious effort to reduce their risk by practicing safer sex. Two-thirds!

Talk about it. Even though its a difficult subject for everyone, chances are your partner is just as concerned as you are and would probably welcome a chance to discuss it.

Let's stop making excuses. Let's stop the spread of AIDS.

Reprinted from ACTS 29, Newsletter of [illegible]

Rectal gonorrhea has declined 86% since the AIDS scare -- people are aware of risks and are changing their sexual habits. Safe sex works.

Bulletin Board

HOOKER'S BALL - HALLOWEEN NIGHT -- Presented by all your favorite bars and the Order of Osiris. Prizes for costumes, all bars are involved, begins 7:00 p.m. Hallowe'en night, costumes are invited, and you are especially requested to attend this celebration of what is turning into the second most exciting activity of the year.

birthdays

HAPPY BIRTHDAY - Queen Richard, Oct. 9, from all the folks at Esquire House.

Label JARS Not PEOPLE

ANNIVERSARY

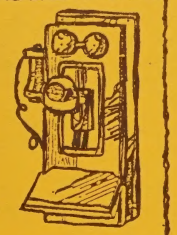
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY - Oct. 5 to Chuck at Troopers on their 2nd Year of fun and support of the community.

HAPPY BELATED ANNIVERSARY TO CPA - We were not notified in time for publication last month, but CPA celebrated their 2nd anniversary on Sept. 27th. Great going, guys!

476-9142

Gay

Help-line



We met at

DAVID'S II

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985

from_the_fellowship

"FREE TO BE"

12TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF MCC

Sacramento, California. The conference got off to an exciting start. Rev. Elders Freda Smith and Nancy Wilson both preached Monday. I especially enjoyed hearing them. The film, "God, Gays, and the Gospel" was also shown for the first time on Monday.

The film, a documentary telling about MCC and what it means, cost about $100,000 to make. Many unique aspects of MCC were brought out. The fact that MCC has membrers from every religious background and the highest proportion of women ministers were particularly interesting.

In the business meetings, a great deal was accomplished in the first few days. The Government Structures and Systems proposal was accepted with some minor amendments. Two changes will have the most immediate impact. One is the adoption of the General Council as the governing body of MCC. The General Council will be composed of the Board of Directors and the District Coordinators, thus giving total regional representation at the highest MCC level. The other change is that there will be only commissioned and chartered churches (instead of the three tier system as previously: Study group, mission, chartered church.). At the conference I was an official observer, with a voice, but without vote. In the future, all delegates will have a vote. Each delegate will represent one hundred members or a portion of 100 if the church is smaller. This means that even the smallest church will have a voting delegate.

All of the elders standing for re-election were elected.

I had an opportunity to sing in the Conference Choir, and attended several workshops, including the Sexuality and Spirituality and Spiritual Gifts workshop.

R.P., Delegate

Check it Out

MCC is the largest Gay/Lesbian organization in the world.

NOW (Nat'l Organization for Women) offers insurance for "significant others" (not just physicians, but alternative medicine as well).

Jerry Falwell and his "Moral Majority" are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars across the country to stop Gay/Lesbian rights.

A local printer refused to print our first newsletter because of its content.

A local bank refused to open a joint bank account for a well-known Gay couple.

The Unitarian-Universalist Association openly supports Gay/Lesbian rights.

Mobile Mental Health has actively trained and offers continued support for the Gay Helpline volunteers.

The Gay Helpline is in operation every night from 6 p.m. to midnight for anyone needing someone to talk to -- check it out.

The local bar owners and managers -- Chuck, Miss Betty, Jim, John, Grace and David -- make the printing and mailing of this newsletter possible.

The bar owners and managers donated money and supplies for the kick-off party to celebrate the opening of the Helpline, and that we will be raising funds for the Helpline from time to time, due to their generosity.

...from the pastor

SAUL AND ANOMIE

In the late 1800's, the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, coined the word ANOMIE (without a name) to explain the psychological state of strangers, people at the edge of social movements with enormous change, and people who belonged to subcultures where they were unsure of what the social expectations were within a dominant group. They felt, as James Baldwin must have, like "nobody knows my name." As a matter of fact, in a true state of anomie, it's more like "I don't even know my own name." Durkheim postulated that when a society is experiencing great anomie, the suicide rate goes up. When I read of Saul, the first king of Israel in the Bible, I realized that even in Biblical times, people knew the concept of anomie, even though they didn't know the word.

Saul lived in an anomic time. He was a soldier who had been trained in the old skills of warfare before iron was invented. Suddenly, there was iron. And iron was so strong that all the weapons he had been taught to use were nearly useless. So he learned to use iron, but he was never comfortable with it. Then the people of his area learned about a new God, and all the things he was used to in the old gods were outdated. To add to his problems, Jahweh decided Saul should be king of Israel. Saul wasn't from a royal family (there weren't any royal families in Israel -- he was the first) and he didn't know how a king behaved, he'd never even had a king. But Jahweh had selected him to be king. And still worse, his son gets friendly with this David fellow -- and he knows there's something strange there -- but can that fellow play the harp! He wasn't even permitted to ask the seer what was going to happen, and feel secure, he had to trust this Jahweh God. Saul learned to adapt -- but he was never happy with the new ways, and when things really got tough, he looked to his old gods and went over to see the Witch of Endor to find out what the enemy had in store. That was where he and Jahweh God parted. Poor Saul. He was caught in a world he hardly understood! Everything was changing, nothing seemed to have a center. How he wished for the good old days, when the gods were secure, the military knew what they were doing, the country had the right kind of folk leading it, and people knew how to behave-- knew the rules. Saul was so confused, he hardly knew his own name any more. He was a real case of anomie. And eventually, he did what Durkheim postulated -- he committed suicide.

Can you see some parallels? Many people today feel that sense of anomie. The world has changed so rapidly that people are frightened. They want some sense of the past to hold on to. God, they pray, make it safe again, let me know what to expect! Many Christians are at that point. The world has changed so greatly that they are frightened. Nuclear energy, great social upheaval -- especially within the time of the baby boomers; new forms of government--like Communism and socialism -- scare them. The questioning of old beliefs and the arising of new ideas --all of these together are frightening for people who remember how simple it was when everybody knew what to expect. When the milk train stopped and the old time religion had meaning for everyone -- when everyone was American and your neighbor wasn't a Cambodian Buddhist, a Russian Jew, a Japanese Taoist and your son or daughter hadn't picked up some new religion like the Moonies. When sexuality and sex roles were simple -- men were men and women were girls, and nobody they knew was gay. People out there are scared. And they want the old time religion that had meaning and they want to go back to the time when everybody knew the rules. Well, it's that kind of time, and Jerry Falwell plays upon the fears of those people, and promises them "The Old Time Gospel Hour" and tells them who the enemy is (us), and they follow him, and he profits, and profits, and profits.

But maybe there's more to it than that. Durkheim was also talking about anomie being a condition for strangers and sojourners and for people in subcultures. Maybe there's something there for us, as well. Gay liberation has called us to come out -- it has asked us to change our ways and to trust God to help us find a way to be a new kind of gay people-- strong, and open, and fearless. And

SOOM AND DIGNITY TO BEGIN IN MOBILE

Efforts are being made to organize two new organizations for gay and Lesbian people in Mobile. According to John P., who is spearheading the drive, the Silver Owls of Mobile (SOOM) and a Dignity chapter are looking for persons interested in these groups.

SOOM is a social group for older people, usually over the age of 40, and for younger people who like to be with older gays and Lesbians.

Dignity is an organization for gay Catholics and their friends. The chapter will be part of the national organization that consists of over 117 chapters across the nation.

"Too often gay and Lesbian Catholics feel alienated from their church. Dignity has been successful in being a bridge for these people to rebuild a religious life. Also, Dignity has been effective in creating a dialogue with the church's hierarchy," said John P.

He noted that the SOOM organization is simply an attempt to bring people together in a social context. "Many older gays and Lesbians simply have no social place to go except the bars, where they are usually ignored by younger people. SOOM will be an attempt to provide a congenial group for dinner parties, theater and other outings.

Anyone interested in SOOM or Dignity is asked to contact John at 342-7891, or the HELPLINE at 476-9142.

FIRST NIGHTERS

People interested in going to theater: Involves joining Joe Jefferson Players ($25.00 for 6 plays/musicals) plus other theater presentations. Call HELPLINE for further information - 476-9142.

Club Park Ave
#7 S. Joachim St.
Mobile, AL 36602
(205) 433-1236
JIM CRISS
General Manager

...from the pastor

maybe we, too, are like the Falwell followers. It was so secure in my closet. I was so comfortable hiding. I really don't need these new, frightening ideas of openness and liberation, do I? Oh, yes, you do. You need them for your mental health, you need them for your ability to be a whole person, you need them in a world of change, so that you can change with the world and not be stuck, as Saul was, in fear. Saul clung to the old gods, and could not trust Jahweh God -- and he lost. Most of us try the same thing. We stick to our old gods, our closetedness and our lies. God sees through us -- God knows who we are, and God loves us enough to invite us to be KING. Be all you can be, be the royal person God invites you to be. The alternative for far too many of us has been Saul's solution, suicide; the death of who we really are or can be. The gay community is growing up, and learning that in taking risks there is strength and growth. Don't be a Saul -- be a David. Take the risks -- and grow!

COMING OUT

I've often heard Rev. Marge quote her friend from Providence, Ray LaRiviere, who coined a phrase about gay attitudes, "As long as I can boogie, I'm free." A lot of us started out the same way. If it hadn't been for Gay/Lesbian bars, we would have had nothing. Work, a relationship, maybe -- and then party time at the bars. But heavens, don't ask me to meet your there before the sun went down.

We remain in our closets, doing nothing, hoping and sometimes even praying that no one ever discovers who we "really are." From birth, almost, we are conditioned that to be Gay/Lesbian is a fate worse than death. So we hide and we die a thousand deaths each day. And then one day something wakes us up and we come face to face with years of playing "straight" games. The roles we adopted are unbelievable and staggering, not to mention the toll oppression has taken on our lives.

Sane or insane? The medical world finally realized our sexual preferences had nothing to do with our sanity. Yet, many of our people have difficulty making it through life. Many suffer dependency problems -- sexual, drug, alcohol -- many are emotionally crippled by "oppression sickness." They really don't remain sane in world that tries to crush them.

To many of you out there, "coming out" would be insane. For many it would be. The greatest day of my life, however, was when I became insane. Oh, I'd already come out to some very selected "straight" friends, having carefully tested the waters before ever diving. Heck, they already knew who I was anyway.

Things started changing the day I walked into the new MCC. Sweat poured down my back, fear gripped every part of my body. I made myself sit in the second pew from the front, another bold move for me. I looked behind me, and came face to face with an older "straight couple." I muttered some weird excuse (to whom I still don't know) and got up to leave. But I didn't.

I made it through the daylight. I made it through the service in God's house. I was introduced to the older couple and lived. Last week at Bruno's I happened to notice my attire and chuckled to myself. My MCC teeshirt looked quite nice! A couple of people gave me knowing smiles, but most of the shoppers paid no attention to me. Most of them, if they knew what an MCC was wouldn't have cared anyway. Most of your professional associates, your families, your straight friends probably know who you are right now. Some may not want the confrontation of being told, but many would welcome your openness and applaud your courage and honesty.

For years, a small minority ran my life. Now I'm in charge. IT FEELS GOOD!!!

October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
UU WORSHIP 10:30 AM ev. every Sunday	NOVEMBER 1st ROCKY HORROR SHOW AT ESQUIRE WITH OSTRIS	1	2 RAP; W[illegible]'s on Top-- Power in Relationships.	3		[illegible]ER'S ANNIVERSARY
6 MCC WORSHIP 7:00 P.M. 5:30 New Memb	7	8	9 RAP: Peer Pressure - Handling your friends.	10	11	12 COLUMBUS DAY
13 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 3:00Shrimp Boil at DAVID'sII UUVOLLEYBALL	14 COLUMBUS DAY OBSERVED	15	16 RAP Cross-Generational Relationships	17	18 UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS 2-DAY WORKSHOP	19 "The Haunting Church"
20 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 5:30 New Memb	21	22	23 RAP HOLDING HANDS Making a political statement.	24	25	26
27 MCC WORSHIP-7pm UU VOLLEYBALL 5:30 New Memb MOTHER-IN-LAW DAY	28	29	30 RAP HOMOPHOBIA -- THEIRS AND OURS	31 HOOKER'S BALL ALL THE BARS HALLOWEEN		

CLASSIFIED ADS

Weekend Sketch Group -- interested? Call the HELPLINE for information.

WRITERS GROUP -- Meet once a month for social contact and constructive criticism of members' work. Bring a piece of writing for criticism, and ke p a log of the number of hours spent wri ting. Contact Shirley L. at the HELPLINE.

BIKERS (no, silly, not that kind!) are being sought for a bike riding group. Ride, bring lunch and picnic-- weather will be perfect soon.

Halloween

FOR SALE: SCM Electric Typewriter, ribbon spool. Best offer. Evenings 8-10. 342-7891, ask for John.

PLUMBING - Indoors, reasonable rates. Expert service. Call evenings after 6, or Mondays, 476-5171, as for Harry.

CLEANING-INTERIOR PAINTING, WALLPAPER. Organize your precious collectibles?? Excellent references in both communities. 476-9142, ask for Shirley.

BOWLING LEAGUE -- Members of MCC want to form a bowling team to hopefully compete against other gay groups (bars, etc.). At least six teams are needed. Call the HELPLINE if you are interested.

SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.
433-9141

SUN. - THURS. 10 A. M. - 2 A.M.
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS

ESQUIRE
BAR & LOUNGE

— Phone 433-9175 —
Mon.-Fri. 9:30 a.m. Till
Sat. 9:30 a.m.-2a.m.
13 South Joachim St. Mobile, Ala.

The Metropolitan Community Church
AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD — MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA
Pastor

(205) 476-9142

Volume 1, No. 2 — October 1985

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART...

The veil of distaste and misconceptions surrounding the gay segment of the population is nowhere better illustrated than in the film, "God, Gays and the Gospel," a no-nonsense look at the rapid rise of the Metropolitan Community Church.

One of the most poignant plights of gay people in today's world is the denial of their right to worship by most of the traditional organized religions. Almost without exception the Christian faith has taken upon itself the right to refuse gays a part in the Family of God.

The long struggle by MCC founder Rev. Troy Perry to establish a faith, not just for gays but for anyone, is the focus of the film. In concise, to the point terms, the production addresses the sheer magnitude of the work being done and the forward strides being made by Perry and his legion of pastors and congregations.

Since its founding in 1969, MCC has endured everything from ridicule to bombings to burned-out church sanctuaries. More than 17 years later, Perry and his followers have forged a recognized, respected faith wherein all are welcomed. It is a tribute to the ecumenical and accepting nature of this church that 20 per cent of its members are non-gay. It is a true illustration of the overused, misused term, "real Christian people."

Perry, a transplanted Floridian, excluded from the church of his childhood, spent years berating himself as "unacceptable." In the end, he determined that there is no reason -- save for human bigotry and Biblical misinterpretation -- for gays to be denied a right to their faith. Nowhere in the Bible, he points out, is there condemnation of homosexuality as it is understood today. In one of his most moving sermons, he presents a stunning point: "If AIDS is God's "gift" to the homosexual, then is toxic shock syndrome God's "gift" to women for being female? ...or is Legionnaires' Disease God's "gift" to the American Legion for being too patriotic?

From the perspective of a "straight," the message of "God, Gays, and the Gospel" is very much to the point: No human deserves the right to tell another he or she will never be acceptable in the eyes of God. Moreover, it should be remembered that Perry et al are not working for immediate and total social acceptance, but for establishment of a climate of cooperation and understanding.

No "straight" who professes a concern for human rights should let gays bear this struggle alone.

(Note: N.J.Green is MCC at Mobile's "token straight," our assistant organist. Thank God for our "straight" friends.)

REMINDER

MCC MEMBERS-ATTENTION!
Congregational Meeting, October 27, following worship service. Election of officers, other important business, including coming into agreement with GSS changes.

FROM THE EDITOR--

Our first issue was a roaring success, so the community tells us. We personally wish to thank the bar owners and managers for making the newsletter a reality, rather than the "dream" so many of us have talked about for the last couple of years. At last we have a way to communicate ideas among gays in Mobile. We also want to apologize to Chuck at Troopers for omitting a news item last month. Thanks for bearing with us and our mistakes -- we'll get it right with practice. A word of thanks to all of you out there from the small group at MCC. Because of you the newsletter will continue to grow, to increase our awareness and to solidify the community.

To date we have received the names "Revelations," "Mobile Pride News," and "Genesis." Don't be bashful. Send or call in your suggestion.

We stated our purpose last month, "to offer a news source for the entire community." We are happy to report that this issue, our second, has accomplished that goal. Sincere applause to each organization and business for your participation. We are open to your suggestions and your criticism. Our new feature. "Community Profile" has already been designated for the November issue. Send in the name of someone you wish to acknowledge in a future issue.

Our editorial policy requires that a name and address be submitted along with newscopy. Your name and address will not be printed without your written consent, but we must have this information to protect the legal position of the church. Please drop editorial copy or editorial replies at the church or mail them to: MCC Newsletter, P.O. Box 8524, Mobile, Ala. 36608. The deadline for all copy is the Third Monday of the Month.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

NEWS FROM THE LESBIAN TASK FORCE OF NOW

Two important pieces of legislation are going to be brought to Congress in this year, NOW has informed us. One, is H.R. 230, the Federal Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights Legislation which is spearheaded by Representative Ted Weiss of Brooklyn, N.Y. and carries the endorsement of 44 other representatives, including Rep. Gerry Studds of Massachusetts, an openly gay legislator. The bill primarily calls for the insertion of the words, "affexional or sexual orientation," throughout the Civil Rights Act of 1964, following the word "color," and in other legislation, like the Equal opportunity Act, where it is inserted after "sex." thus identifying gay and Lesbian discrimination as equal to that against people of color and as pervasive as sexism. Interestingly, the same act speaks against acts of intimidation or violence against gays and Lesbians in the same passage that it speaks about violence against religious groups.

The other piece of legislation is the now infamous McCarran-Walter act, which prohibits certain people from entering the United States because of political or sexual orientation. Farley Mowat, the Canadian author of such dangerous books as the environmental study, "Never Cry Wolf," and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Colombia's Nobel Prize Winning novelist, were both excluded -- and refused to be singled out as special cases -- under this Act. Gay men and women can be refused entry into the U.S. -- and have been -- by the terms of the McCarran Act. It is important for the McCarran Act to not include gays and Lesbians under the heading of those accused of "moral turpitude."

The legislation above is entitled Immigration Exclusion and Deportation Amendments of 1985. The first is HR 230. Your congressional representative will vote on both of these. Make your wishes known. One letter -- one letter -- can make the difference, because very few letters on any subject are received from constituents, and as many as five or six letters can seem like an avalanche. If you are interested in how to write to Congress, call the HELPLINE for a copy of MCC's booklet, Writing to Congress, from MCC's Department of Christian Social Action.

Bulletin Board

ORDER OF OSIRIS - "The Rocky Horror Show" Friday and Saturday, November 1 and 2, Presented by the Order of Osiris and the Esquire House -- at the Esquire House. $5.00 admission. See an Osiris member or your bartender for tickets.

Less than 140 days to Osiris' 5th Anniversary Mardi Gras Ball, February 7, 1986.

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - Study series for 4 weeks on Men's Life and Men's Issues. Call the UU's at 342-6834 for information and starting date (near the end of the month.)

2-day Workshop -- The Haunting Church October 18 and 19 at the UU Fellowship 6345 Old Shell Road.

Volleyball -- every 2nd and 4th Sunday, at 2 P.M. at the UU's, weather permitting.

better gay than grumpy

TROOPERS - Shuffleboard tournaments every Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. Pool tournaments every Thursday at 8:30. Some of the best popcorn in Mobile.

CORRAL - Pool tournament every Monday at 9:00 p.m. Please watch for announcements of upcoming Halloween events.

CPA - Costume contest at midnight in conjunction with Hooker's Ball.

Free buffet every Sunday at 9:30 p.m.

Watch for "Name that Tune" to begin early NOvember on Sunday evenings.

DAVID'S II - Special Guest, Halloween Eve through Saturday, Carmen Del Rio.

First Sunday of October begins David's free buffet from 3-9 p.m., and the Tea Dance.

Shrimp boil, Sunday October 13th, from 3 til? To help raise funds for MCC's HELPLINE and newsletter. $3.00 cover, includes all the boiled shrimp you can eat, along with other goodies.

ESQUIRE - Rocky Horror Show November 1 and 2 at 9:30 p.m. Get your tickets from Esquire or any Osiris member. $5.00 per ticket.

PROFILE

Did you enjoy Mobile's Gay Pride 85? Our first profile is, Harry, organizer and leader of Pride 85. Harry was the catalyst that brought together the various elements of the community. It wasn't his first time out, certainly not his first effort for our benefit. Fifteen years in the Mobile area has seen Harry speaking at the University of South Alabama and Springhill College on Gay/Lesbian issues. He was one of the strong leaders of the old Gulf Alliance for Equality as well.

When Harry isn't working on our behalf, he enjoys meeting the public in his retail profession. While there's still daylight after a hard day at work, you might see him out bicycling or running, or on Sundays offering his talents at the Unitarian-Universalists' worship and fellowship. "My religion," Harry said, has given me a lot more direction in my life, and a greater sense of freedom to allow my own beliefs to evolve."

Harry offered the following thoughts about and reflections on Gay Pride'85: '85 was very successfull considering the late starting date for planning. '84, our first Gay Pride Activity, made '85 much easier to put together. Adding more organizations -- the UU's and MCC -- added much to '85's success. Without Danni B. '85 would not have come toether. A SPECIAL THANKS TO HER.

For 1986 Gay Pride, Harry foresees greatness. "For once, we are starting off with some money, $186.00, thanks to the bars. We will begin planning at a much earlier date, offering the same type of activities, with more variety, however. We will certainly push for more publicity and participation from all the organizations. We want Gay Pride to be financially self-supporting, and there's no reason it shouldn't be if we all work at it."

When asked what he would change if given the right opportunity, Harry offered the following: "I'd like to see more open Gay/Lesbian businesses, organizations, and individuals come out, and a greater media presence for the community. However, the fear of coming out is still our greatest obstacle. Most of us, including me, still face job discrimination, neighborhood harassment, and the possible loss of our families or their strong disapproval."

In a larger context, Harry went on, "Much of our recent publicity has been derogatory. I feel that the Moral Majority uses us as their biggest fundraiser, particularly now that AIDS has come to the forefront of the news media."

Harry is one of the strongest and most open figures in our Mobile Gay Community, and with his support and leadership, gay Mobile should reach the goals which he is helping us set.

SOCIETY LOUNGE -- Beginning in October, the first weekend each month, Miss Betty will be presenting weekend shows at 10 and 12 midnight. No cover.

SOMETHING TO SELL, SERVICE TO OFFER?? Call 476-9142 for rates and deadlines. Please NO PERSONALS, except Birthday, Anniversary, Thank You's.

TROOPERS
215 Conti Street
438-9139
HOURS: 11 a.m.-3 a.m.

CORRAL
54 So. Conception
433-9258
Weekdays - Noon Till
Weekends - 24 hours

THERE IS NO LONGER AN EXCUSE FOR SPREADING AIDS

Right now in the gay community, we're faced with some extremely difficult decisions because of AIDS -- sexual decisions affecting our lives and lifestyles. We Gaymen have come up with a lot of excuses for avoiding the issue.

We all know that safer sex can reduce the risk of contracting and spreading AIDS. Some practices are more effective than others; some we have questions about.

We all need to make informed decisions, not excuses. You'll probably agree that none of the following excuses justify the pread of AIDS in our community:

"WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And it's the community's. Everyone must take a concerned and active role if we're going to stop the spread of this disease.

Here's another common excuse: "If someone doesn't ask me to practice safer sex, I figure that's his decision and I respect it."

Why? Aren't you concerned? Perhaps your partner is just as uncomfortable in raising the issue as you are.

"WHOSE LIFE IS IT, ANYWAY?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And the community's. The excuse, "It's my life," is only partly true. The life of your partner and the well-being of the community are also at stake.

AIDS is not just a physical problem. There are political, social, and economic effects as well. There is already evidence that social freedoms may be restricted because of AIDS. AIDS can be used as an excuse for anti-Gay action and legislation.

Making decisions about sexual practices is difficult. Sticking to those decisions is even more difficult. But this isn't a moral issue; it's a matter of life and death.

"CHANGING MY SEX LIFE ISN'T A CURE FOR AIDS."

That's true. There is no cure or vaccine. And researchers think they are years away from developing one. Safer sexual practices are our best means right now of reducing our risk and stopping the spread of AIDS.

"CHANGE? NOBODY ELSE IS DOING IT!"

The fact is that a major research project conducted by the AIDS Foundation among San Francisco Gaymen revealed that two-thirds of the Gay community is making a serious effort to reduce their risk by practicing safer sex. Two-thirds!

Talk about it. Even though its a difficult subject for everyone, chances are your partner is just as concerned as you are and would probably welcome a chance to discuss it.

Let's stop making excuses. Let's stop the spread of AIDS.

Reprinted from ACTS 29, Newsletter of [illegible]

Rectal gonorrhea has declined 86% since the AIDS scare -- people are aware of risks and are changing their sexual habits. Safe sex works.

Bulletin Board

HOOKER'S BALL - HALLOWEEN NIGHT -- Presented by all your favorite bars and the Order of Osiris. Prizes for costumes, all bars are involved, begins 7:00 p.m. Hallowe'en night, costumes are invited, and you are especially requested to attend this celebration of what is turning into the second most exciting activity of the year.

Birthdays

HAPPY BIRTHDAY - Queen Richard, Oct. 9, from all the folks at Esquire House.

Label JARS Not PEOPLE

ANNIVERSARY

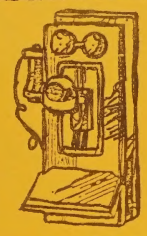
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY - Oct. 5 to Chuck at Troopers on their 2nd Year of fun and support of the community.

HAPPY BELATED ANNIVERSARY TO CPA - We were not notified in time for publication last month, but CPA celebrated their 2nd anniversary on Sept. 27th. Great going, guys!

476-9142

Gay

Help-line



We met at

DAVID'S II

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985

from the fellowship

"FREE TO BE"

12TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF MCC

Sacramento, California. The conference got off to an exciting start. Rev. Elders Freda Smith and Nancy Wilson both preached Monday. I especially enjoyed hearing them. The film, "God, Gays, and the Gospel" was also shown for the first time on Monday.

The film, a documentary telling about MCC and what it means, cost about $100,000 to make. Many unique aspects of MCC were brought out. The fact that MCC has membrers from every religious background and the highest proportion of women ministers were particularly interesting.

In the business meetings, a great deal was accomplished in the first few days. The Government Structures and Systems proposal was accepted with some minor amendments. Two changes will have the most immediate impact. One is the adoption of the General Council as the governing body of MCC. The General Council will be composed of the Board of Directors and the District Coordinators, thus giving total regional representation at the highest MCC level. The other change is that there will be only commissioned and chartered churches (instead of the three tier system as previously: Study group, mission, chartered church.). At the conference I was an official observer, with a voice, but without vote. In the future, all delegates will have a vote. Each delegate will represent one hundred members or a portion of 100 if the church is smaller. This means that even the smallest church will have a voting delegate.

All of the elders standing for re-election were elected.

I had an opportunity to sing in the Conference Choir, and attended several workshops, including the Sexuality and Spirituality and Spiritual Gifts workshop.

R.P., Delegate

Check it Out

MCC is the largest Gay/Lesbian organization in the world.

NOW (Nat'l Organization for Women) offers insurance for "significant others" (not just physicians, but alternative medicine as well).

Jerry Falwell and his "Moral Majority" are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars across the country to stop Gay/Lesbian rights.

A local printer refused to print our first newsletter because of its content.

A local bank refused to open a joint bank account for a well-known Gay couple.

The Unitarian-Universalist Association openly supports Gay/Lesbian rights.

Mobile Mental Health has actively trained and offers continued support for the Gay Helpline volunteers.

The Gay Helpline is in operation every night from 6 p.m. to midnight for anyone needing someone to talk to -- check it out.

The local bar owners and managers -- Chuck, Miss Betty, Jim, John, Grace and David -- make the printing and mailing of this newsletter possible.

The bar owners and managers donated money and supplies for the kick-off party to celebrate the opening of the Helpline, and that we will be raising funds for the Helpline from time to time, due to their generosity.

...from the pastor

SAUL AND ANOMIE

In the late 1800's, the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, coined the word ANOMIE (without a name) to explain the psychological state of strangers, people at the edge of social movements with enormous change, and people who belonged to subcultures where they were unsure of what the social expectations were within a dominant group. They felt, as James Baldwin must have, like "nobody knows my name." As a matter of fact, in a true state of anomie, it's more like "I don't even know my own name." Durkheim postulated that when a society is experiencing great anomie, the suicide rate goes up. When I read of Saul, the first king of Israel in the Bible, I realized that even in Biblical times, people knew the concept of anomie, even though they didn't know the word.

Saul lived in an anomic time. He was a soldier who had been trained in the old skills of warfare before iron was invented. Suddenly, there was iron. And iron was so strong that all the weapons he had been taught to use were nearly useless. So he learned to use iron, but he was never comfortable with it. Then the people of his area learned about a new God, and all the things he was used to in the old gods were outdated. To add to his problems, Jahweh decided Saul should be king of Israel. Saul wasn't from a royal family (there weren't any royal families in Israel -- he was the first) and he didn't know how a king behaved, he'd never even had a king. But Jahweh had selected him to be king. And still worse, his son gets friendly with this David fellow -- and he knows there's something strange there -- but can that fellow play the harp! He wasn't even permitted to ask the seer what was going to happen, and feel secure, he had to trust this Jahweh God. Saul learned to adapt -- but he was never happy with the new ways, and when things really got tough, he looked to his old gods and went over to see the Witch of Endor to find out what the enemy had in store. That was where he and Jahweh God parted. Poor Saul. He was caught in a world he hardly understood! Everything was changing, nothing seemed to have a center. How he wished for the good old days, when the gods were secure, the military knew what they were doing, the country had the right kind of folk leading it, and people knew how to behave-- knew the rules. Saul was so confused, he hardly knew his own name any more. He was a real case of anomie. And eventually, he did what Durkheim postulated -- he committed suicide.

Can you see some parallels? Many people today feel that sense of anomie. The world has changed so rapidly that people are frightened. They want some sense of the past to hold on to. God, they pray, make it safe again, let me know what to expect! Many Christians are at that point. The world has changed so greatly that they are frightened. Nuclear energy, great social upheaval -- especially within the time of the baby boomers; new forms of government--like Communism and socialism -- scare them. The questioning of old beliefs and the arising of new ideas --all of these together are frightening for people who remember how simple it was when everybody knew what to expect. When the milk train stopped and the old time religion had meaning for everyone -- when everyone was American and your neighbor wasn't a Cambodian Buddhist, a Russian Jew, a Japanese Taoist and your son or daughter hadn't picked up some new religion like the Moonies. When sexuality and sex roles were simple -- men were men and women were girls, and nobody they knew was gay. People out there are scared. And they want the old time religion that had meaning and they want to go back to the time when everybody knew the rules. Well, it's that kind of time, and Jerry Falwell plays upon the fears of those people, and promises them "The Old Time Gospel Hour" and tells them who the enemy is (us), and they follow him, and he profits, and profits, and profits.

But maybe there's more to it than that. Durkheim was also talking about anomie being a condition for strangers and sojourners and for people in subcultures. Maybe there's something there for us, as well. Gay liberation has called us to come out -- it has asked us to change our ways and to trust God to help us find a way to be a new kind of gay people-- strong, and open, and fearless. And

WELCOME

SOOM AND DIGNITY TO BEGIN IN MOBILE

Efforts are being made to organize two new organizations for gay and Lesbian people in Mobile. According to John P., who is spearheading the drive, the Silver Owls of Mobile (SOOM) and a Dignity chapter are looking for persons interested in these groups.

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...from the pastor

maybe we, too, are like the Falwell followers. It was so secure in my closet. I was so comfortable hiding. I really don't need these new, frightening ideas of openness and liberation, do I? Oh, yes, you do. You need them for your mental health, you need them for your ability to be a whole person, you need them in a world of change, so that you can change with the world and not be stuck, as Saul was, in fear. Saul clung to the old gods, and could not trust Jahweh God -- and he lost. Most of us try the same thing. We stick to our old gods, our closetedness and our lies. God sees through us -- God knows who we are, and God loves us enough to invite us to be KING. Be all you can be, be the royal person God invites you to be. The alternative for far too many of us has been Saul's solution, suicide; the death of who we really are or can be. The gay community is growing up, and learning that in taking risks there is strength and growth. Don't be a Saul -- be a David. Take the risks -- and grow!

COMING OUT

I've often heard Rev. Marge quote her friend from Providence, Ray LaRiviere, who coined a phrase about gay attitudes, "As long as I can boogie, I'm free." A lot of us started out the same way. If it hadn't been for Gay/Lesbian bars, we would have had nothing. Work, a relationship, maybe -- and then party time at the bars. But heavens, don't ask me to meet your there before the sun went down.

We remain in our closets, doing nothing, hoping and sometimes even praying that no one ever discovers who we "really are." From birth, almost, we are conditioned that to be Gay/Lesbian is a fate worse than death. So we hide and we die a thousand deaths each day. And then one day something wakes us up and we come face to face with years of playing "straight" games. The roles we adopted are unbelievable and staggering, not to mention the toll oppression has taken on our lives.

Sane or insane? The medical world finally realized our sexual preferences had nothing to do with our sanity. Yet, many of our people have difficulty making it through life. Many suffer dependency problems -- sexual, drug, alcohol -- many are emotionally crippled by "oppression sickness." They really don't remain sane in world that tries to crush them.

To many of you out there, "coming out" would be insane. For many it would be. The greatest day of my life, however, was when I became insane. Oh, I'd already come out to some very selected "straight" friends, having carefully tested the waters before ever diving. Heck, they already knew who I was anyway.

Things started changing the day I walked into the new MCC. Sweat poured down my back, fear gripped every part of my body. I made myself sit in the second pew from the front, another bold move for me. I looked behind me, and came face to face with an older "straight couple." I muttered some weird excuse (to whom I still don't know) and got up to leave. But I didn't.

I made it through the daylight. I made it through the service in God's house. I was introduced to the older couple and lived. Last week at Bruno's I happened to notice my attire and chuckled to myself. My MCC teeshirt looked quite nice! A couple of people gave me knowing smiles, but most of the shoppers paid no attention to me. Most of them, if they knew what an MCC was wouldn't have cared anyway. Most of your professional associates, your families, your straight friends probably know who you are right now. Some may not want the confrontation of being told, but many would welcome your openness and applaud your courage and honesty.

For years, a small minority ran my life. Now I'm in charge. IT FEELS GOOD!!!

October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
UU WORSHIP 10:30 AM ev. every Sunday	NOVEMBER 1st ROCKY HORROR SHOW AT ESQUIRE WITH OSTRIS	1	2 RAP; Who's on Top-- Power in Relationships.	3		FR'S ANNIVERSARY
6 MCC WORSHIP 7:00 P.M. 5:30 New Memb.	7	8	9 RAP: Peer Pressure - Handling your friends.	10	11	12 COLUMBUS DAY
13 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 3:00 Shrimp Boil at DAVID'S!! UU VOLLEYBALL	14 COLUMBUS DAY OBSERVED	15	16 RAP Cross-Generational Relationships	17	18 UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS 2-DAY WORKSHOP	19 "The Haunting Church"
20 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 5:30 New Memb	21	22	23 RAP HOLDING HANDS Making a political statement.	24	25	26
27 MCC WORSHIP-7pm UU VOLLEYBALL 5:30 New Memb MOTHER-IN-LAW DAY	28	29	30 RAP HOMOPHOBIA -- THEIRS AND OURS	31 HOOKER'S BALL ALL THE BARS HALLOWEEN		

CLASSIFIED ADS

Weekend Sketch Group -- interested? Call the HELPLINE for information.

WRITERS GROUP -- Meet once a month for social contact and constructive criticism of members' work. Bring a piece of writing for criticism, and ke p a log of the number of hours spent wri ting. Contact Shirley L. at the HELPLINE.

BIKERS (no, silly, not that kind!) are being sought for a bike riding group. Ride, bring lunch and picnic-- weather will be perfect soon.

Halloween

FOR SALE: SCM Electric Typewriter, ribbon spool. Best offer. Evenings 8-10. 342-7891, ask for John.

PLUMBING - Indoors, reasonable rates. Expert service. Call evenings after 6, or Mondays, 476-5171, as for Harry.

CLEANING-INTERIOR PAINTING, WALLPAPER. Organize your precious collectibles?? Excellent references in both communities. 476-9142, ask for Shirley.

BOWLING LEAGUE -- Members of MCC want to form a bowling team to hopefully compete against other gay groups (bars, etc.). At least six teams are needed. Call the HELPLINE if you are interested.

SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.
433-9141

SUN. - THURS. 10 A. M. - 2 A. M.
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS

ESQUIRE
BAR & LOUNGE

- Phone 433-9175 -
Mon.-Fri. 9:30 a.m. Till
Sat. 9:30 a.m.-2a.m.
13 South Joachim St. Mobile, Ala.

The Metropolitan Community Church
AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD — MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA, Pastor — (205) 476-9142

Volume 1, No. 2 — October 1985

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART...

The veil of distaste and misconceptions surrounding the gay segment of the population is nowhere better illustrated than in the film, "God, Gays and the Gospel," a no-nonsense look at the rapid rise of the Metropolitan Community Church.

One of the most poignant plights of gay people in today's world is the denial of their right to worship by most of the traditional organized religions. Almost without exception the Christian faith has taken upon itself the right to refuse gays a part in the Family of God.

The long struggle by MCC founder Rev. Troy Perry to establish a faith, not just for gays but for anyone, is the focus of the film. In concise, to the point terms, the production addresses the sheer magnitude of the work being done and the forward strides being made by Perry and his legion of pastors and congregations.

Since its founding in 1969, MCC has endured everything from ridicule to bombings to burned-out church sanctuaries. More than 17 years later, Perry and his followers have forged a recognized, respected faith wherein all are welcomed. It is a tribute to the ecumenical and accepting nature of this church that 20 per cent of its members are non-gay. It is a true illustration of the overused, misused term, "real Christian people."

Perry, a transplanted Floridian, excluded from the church of his childhood, spent years berating himself as "unacceptable." In the end, he determined that there is no reason -- save for human bigotry and Biblical misinterpretation -- for gays to be denied a right to their faith. Nowhere in the Bible, he points out, is there condemnation of homosexuality as it is understood today. In one of his most moving sermons, he presents a stunning point: "If AIDS is God's "gift" to the homosexual, then is toxic shock syndrome God's "gift" to women for being female? ...or is Legionnaires' Disease God's "gift" to the American Legion for being too patriotic?

From the perspective of a "straight," the message of "God, Gays, and the Gospel" is very much to the point: No human deserves the right to tell another he or she will never be acceptable in the eyes of God. Moreover, it should be remembered that Perry et al are not working for immediate and total social acceptance, but for establishment of a climate of cooperation and understanding.

No "straight" who professes a concern for human rights should let gays bear this struggle alone.

(Note: N.J.Green is MCC at Mobile's "token straight," our assistant organist. Thank God for our "straight" friends.)

REMINDER

MCC MEMBERS-ATTENTION!

Congregational Meeting, October 27, following worship service. Election of officers, other important business, including coming into agreement with GSS changes.

FROM THE EDITOR--

Our first issue was a roaring success, so the community tells us. We personally wish to thank the bar owners and managers for making the newsletter a reality, rather than the "dream" so many of us have talked about for the last couple of years. At last we have a way to communicate ideas among gays in Mobile. We also want to apologize to Chuck at Troopers for omitting a news item last month. Thanks for bearing with us and our mistakes -- we'll get it right with practice. A word of thanks to all of you out there from the small group at MCC. Because of you the newsletter will continue to grow, to increase our awareness and to solidify the community.

To date we have received the names "Revelations," "Mobile Pride News," and "Genesis." Don't be bashful. Send or call in your suggestion.

We stated our purpose last month, "to offer a news source for the entire community." We are happy to report that this issue, our second, has accomplished that goal. Sincere applause to each organization and business for your participation. We are open to your suggestions and your criticism. Our new feature. "Community Profile" has already been designated for the November issue. Send in the name of someone you wish to acknowledge in a future issue.

Our editorial policy requires that a name and address be submitted along with newscopy. Your name and address will not be printed without your written consent, but we must have this information to protect the legal position of the church. Please drop editorial copy or editorial replies at the church or mail them to: MCC Newsletter, P.O. Box 8524, Mobile, Ala. 36608. The deadline for all copy is the Third Monday of the Month.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

NEWS FROM THE LESBIAN TASK FORCE OF NOW

Two important pieces of legislation are going to be brought to Congress in this year, NOW has informed us. One, is H.R. 230, the Federal Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights Legislation which is spearheaded by Representative Ted Weiss of Brooklyn, N.Y. and carries the endorsement of 44 other representatives, including Rep. Gerry Studds of Massachusetts, an openly gay legislator. The bill primarily calls for the insertion of the words, "affexional or sexual orientation," throughout the Civil Rights Act of 1964, following the word "color," and in other legislation, like the Equal opportunity Act, where it is inserted after "sex." thus identifying gay and Lesbian discrimination as equal to that against people of color and as pervasive as sexism. Interestingly, the same act speaks against acts of intimidation or violence against gays and Lesbians in the same passage that it speaks about violence against religious groups.

The other piece of legislation is the now infamous McCarran-Walter act, which prohibits certain people from entering the United States because of political or sexual orientation. Farley Mowat, the Canadian author of such dangerous books as the environmental study, "Never Cry Wolf," and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Colombia's Nobel Prize Winning novelist, were both excluded -- and refused to be singled out as special cases -- under this Act. Gay men and women can be refused entry into the U.S. -- and have been -- by the terms of the McCarran Act. It is important for the McCarran Act to not include gays and Lesbians under the heading of those accused of "moral turpitude."

The legislation above is entitled Immigration Exclusion and Deportation Amendments of 1985. The first is HR 230. Your congressional representative will vote on both of these. Make your wishes known. One letter -- one letter -- can make the difference, because very few letters on any subject are received from constituents, and as many as five or six letters can seem like an avalanche. If you are interested in how to write to Congress, call the HELPLINE for a copy of MCC's booklet, Writing to Congress, from MCC's Department of Christian Social Action.

Bulletin Board

ORDER OF OSIRIS - "The Rocky Horror Show" Friday and Saturday, November 1 and 2, Presented by the Order of Osiris and the Esquire House -- at the Esquire House. $5.00 admission. See an Osiris member or your bartender for tickets.

Less than 140 days to Osiris' 5th Anniversary Mardi Gras Ball, February 7, 1986.

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - Study series for 4 weeks on Men's Life and Men's Issues. Call the UU's at 342-6834 for information and starting date (near the end of the month.)

2-day Workshop -- The Haunting Church October 18 and 19 at the UU Fellowship 6345 Old Shell Road.

Volleyball -- every 2nd and 4th Sunday, at 2 P.M. at the UU's, weather permitting.

better gay than grumpy

TROOPERS - Shuffleboard tournaments every Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. Pool tournaments every Thursday at 8:30. Some of the best popcorn in Mobile.

CORRAL - Pool tournament every Monday at 9:00 p.m. Please watch for announcements of upcoming Halloween events.

CPA - Costume contest at midnight in conjunction with Hooker's Ball.

Free buffet every Sunday at 9:30 p.m.

Watch for "Name that Tune" to begin early NOvember on Sunday evenings.

DAVID'S II - Special Guest, Halloween Eve through Saturday, Carmen Del Rio.

First Sunday of October begins David's free buffet from 3-9 p.m., and the Tea Dance.

Shrimp boil, Sunday October 13th, from 3 til? To help raise funds for MCC's HELPLINE and newsletter. $3.00 cover, includes all the boiled shrimp you can eat, along with other goodies.

ESQUIRE - Rocky Horror Show November 1 and 2 at 9:30 p.m. Get your tickets from Esquire or any Osiris member. $5.00 per ticket.

PROFILE

Did you enjoy Mobile's Gay Pride 85? Our first profile is, Harry, organizer and leader of Pride 85. Harry was the catalyst that brought together the various elements of the community. It wasn't his first time out, certainly not his first effort for our benefit. Fifteen years in the Mobile area has seen Harry speaking at the University of South Alabama and Springhill College on Gay/Lesbian issues. He was one of the strong leaders of the old Gulf Alliance for Equality as well.

When Harry isn't working on our behalf, he enjoys meeting the public in his retail profession. While there's still daylight after a hard day at work, you might see him out bicycling or running, or on Sundays offering his talents at the Unitarian-Universalists' worship and fellowship. "My religion," Harry said, has given me a lot more direction in my life, and a greater sense of freedom to allow my own beliefs to evolve."

Harry offered the following thoughts about and reflections on Gay Pride'85: '85 was very successfull considering the late starting date for planning. '84, our first Gay Pride Activity, made '85 much easier to put together. Adding more organizations -- the UU's and MCC -- added much to '85's success. Without Danni B. '85 would not have come toether. A SPECIAL THANKS TO HER.

For 1986 Gay Pride, Harry foresees greatness. "For once, we are starting off with some money, $186.00, thanks to the bars. We will begin planning at a much earlier date, offering the same type of activities, with more variety, however. We will certainly push for more publicity and participation from all the organizations. We want Gay Pride to be financially self-supporting, and there's no reason it shouldn't be if we all work at it."

When asked what he would change if given the right opportunity, Harry offered the following: "I'd like to see more open Gay/Lesbian businesses, organizations, and individuals come out, and a greater media presence for the community. However, the fear of coming out is still our greatest obstacle. Most of us, including me, still face job discrimination, neighborhood harassment, and the possible loss of our families or their strong disapproval."

In a larger context, Harry went on, "Much of our recent publicity has been derogatory. I feel that the Moral Majority uses us as their biggest fundraiser, particularly now that AIDS has come to the forefront of the news media."

Harry is one of the strongest and most open figures in our Mobile Gay Community, and with his support and leadership, gay Mobile should reach the goals which he is helping us set.

SOCIETY LOUNGE - Beginning in October, the first weekend each month, Miss Betty will be presenting weekend shows at 10 and 12 midnight. No cover.

SOMETHING TO SELL, SERVICE TO OFFER?? Call 476-9142 for rates and deadlines. Please NO PERSONALS, except Birthday, Anniversary, Thank You's.

TROOPERS
215 Conti Street
438-9139
HOURS: 11 a.m.-3 a.m.

CORRAL
54 So. Conception
433-9258
Weekdays - Noon Till
Weekends - 24 hours

THERE IS NO LONGER AN EXCUSE FOR SPREADING AIDS

Right now in the gay community, we're faced with some extremely difficult decisions because of AIDS -- sexual decisions affecting our lives and life-styles. We Gaymen have come up with a lot of excuses for avoiding the issue.

We all know that safer sex can reduce the risk of contracting and spreading AIDS. Some practices are more effective than others; some we have questions about.

We all need to make informed decisions, not excuses. You'll probably agree that none of the following excuses justify the pread of AIDS in our community:

"WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And it's the community's. Everyone must take a concerned and active role if we're going to stop the spread of this disease.

Here's another common excuse: "If someone doesn't ask me to practice safer sex, I figure that's his decision and I respect it."

Why? Aren't you concerned? Perhaps your partner is just as uncomfortable in raising the issue as you are.

"WHOSE LIFE IS IT, ANYWAY?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And the community's. The excuse, "It's my life," is only partly true. The life of your partner and the well-being of the community are also at stake.

AIDS is not just a physical problem. There are political, social, and economic effects as well. There is already evidence that social freedoms may be restricted because of AIDS. AIDS can be used as an excuse for anti-Gay action and legislation.

Making decisions about sexual practices is difficult. Sticking to those decisions is even more difficult. But this isn't a moral issue; it's a matter of life and death.

"CHANGING MY SEX LIFE ISN'T A CURE FOR AIDS."

That's true. There is no cure or vaccine. And researchers think they are years away from developing one. Safer sexual practices are our best means right now of reducing our risk and stopping the spread of AIDS.

"CHANGE? NOBODY ELSE IS DOING IT!"

The fact is that a major research project conducted by the AIDS Foundation among San Francisco Gaymen revealed that two-thirds of the Gay community is making a serious effort to reduce their risk by practicing safer sex. Two-thirds!

Talk about it. Even though its a difficult subject for everyone, chances are your partner is just as concerned as you are and would probably welcome a chance to discuss it.

Let's stop making excuses. Let's stop the spread of AIDS.

Reprinted from ACTS 29, Newsletter of [illegible]

Rectal gonorrhea has declined 86% since the AIDS scare -- people are aware of risks and are changing their sexual habits. Safe sex works.

Bulletin Board

HOOKER'S BALL - HALLOWEEN NIGHT -- Presented by all your favorite bars and the Order of Osiris. Prizes for costumes, all bars are involved, begins 7:00 p.m. Hallowe'en night, costumes are invited, and you are especially requested to attend this celebration of what is turning into the second most exciting activity of the year.

Birthdays

HAPPY BIRTHDAY - Queen Richard, Oct.9, from all the folks at Esquire House.

Label JARS Not PEOPLE

ANNIVERSARY

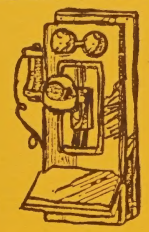
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY - Oct. 5 to Chuck at Troopers on their 2nd Year of fun and support of the community.

HAPPY BELATED ANNIVERSARY TO CPA - We were not notified in time for publication last month, but CPA celebrated their 2nd anniversary on Sept. 27th. Great going, guys!

476-9142

Gay

Help-line



We met at

DAVID'S II

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985

from the fellowship

"FREE TO BE"

12TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF MCC

Sacramento, California. The conference got off to an exciting start. Rev. Elders Freda Smith and Nancy Wilson both preached Monday. I especially enjoyed hearing them. The film, "God, Gays, and the Gospel" was also shown for the first time on Monday.

The film, a documentary telling about MCC and what it means, cost about $100,000 to make. Many unique aspects of MCC were brought out. The fact that MCC has membrers from every religious background and the highest proportion of women ministers were particularly interesting.

In the business meetings, a great deal was accomplished in the first few days. The Government Structures and Systems proposal was accepted with some minor amendments. Two changes will have the most immediate impact. One is the adoption of the General Council as the governing body of MCC. The General Council will be composed of the Board of Directors and the District Coordinators, thus giving total regional representation at the highest MCC level. The other change is that there will be only commissioned and chartered churches (instead of the three tier system as previously: Study group, mission, chartered church.). At the conference I was an official observer, with a voice, but without vote. In the future, all delegates will have a vote. Each delegate will represent one hundred members or a portion of 100 if the church is smaller. This means that even the smallest church will have a voting delegate.

All of the elders standing for re-election were elected.

I had an opportunity to sing in the Conference Choir, and attended several workshops, including the Sexuality and Spirituality and Spiritual Gifts workshop.

R.P., Delegate

Check it Out

MCC is the largest Gay/Lesbian organization in the world.

NOW (Nat'l Organization for Women) offers insurance for "significant others" (not just physicians, but alternative medicine as well).

Jerry Falwell and his "Moral Majority" are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars across the country to stop Gay/Lesbian rights.

A local printer refused to print our first newsletter because of its content.

A local bank refused to open a joint bank account for a well-known Gay couple.

The Unitarian-Universalist Association openly supports Gay/Lesbian rights.

Mobile Mental Health has actively trained and offers continued support for the Gay Helpline volunteers.

The Gay Helpline is in operation every night from 6 p.m. to midnight for anyone needing someone to talk to -- check it out.

The local bar owners and managers -- Chuck, Miss Betty, Jim, John, Grace and David -- make the printing and mailing of this newsletter possible.

The bar owners and managers donated money and supplies for the kick-off party to celebrate the opening of the Helpline, and that we will be raising funds for the Helpline from time to time, due to their generosity.

...from the pastor

SAUL AND ANOMIE

In the late 1800's, the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, coined the word ANOMIE (without a name) to explain the psychological state of strangers, people at the edge of social movements with enormous change, and people who belonged to subcultures where they were unsure of what the social expectations were within a dominant group. They felt, as James Baldwin must have, like "nobody knows my name." As a matter of fact, in a true state of anomie, it's more like "I don't even know my own name." Durkheim postulated that when a society is experiencing great anomie, the suicide rate goes up. When I read of Saul, the first king of Israel in the Bible, I realized that even in Biblical times, people knew the concept of anomie, even though they didn't know the word.

Saul lived in an anomic time. He was a soldier who had been trained in the old skills of warfare before iron was invented. Suddenly, there was iron. And iron was so strong that all the weapons he had been taught to use were nearly useless. So he learned to use iron, but he was never comfortable with it. Then the people of his area learned about a new God, and all the things he was used to in the old gods were outdated. To add to his problems, Jahweh decided Saul should be king of Israel. Saul wasn't from a royal family (there weren't any royal families in Israel -- he was the first) and he didn't know how a king behaved, he'd never even had a king. But Jahweh had selected him to be king. And still worse, his son gets friendly with this David fellow -- and he knows there's something strange there -- but can that fellow play the harp! He wasn't even permitted to ask the seer what was going to happen, and feel secure, he had to trust this Jahweh God. Saul learned to adapt -- but he was never happy with the new ways, and when things really got tough, he looked to his old gods and went over to see the Witch of Endor to find out what the enemy had in store. That was where he and Jahweh God parted. Poor Saul. He was caught in a world he hardly understood! Everything was changing, nothing seemed to have a center. How he wished for the good old days, when the gods were secure, the military knew what they were doing, the country had the right kind of folk leading it, and people knew how to behave-- knew the rules. Saul was so confused, he hardly knew his own name any more. He was a real case of anomie. And eventually, he did what Durkheim postulated -- he committed suicide.

Can you see some parallels? Many people today feel that sense of anomie. The world has changed so rapidly that people are frightened. They want some sense of the past to hold on to. God, they pray, make it safe again, let me know what to expect! Many Christians are at that point. The world has changed so greatly that they are frightened. Nuclear energy, great social upheaval -- especially within the time of the baby boomers; new forms of government--like Communism and socialism -- scare them. The questioning of old beliefs and the arising of new ideas --all of these together are frightening for people who remember how simple it was when everybody knew what to expect. When the milk train stopped and the old time religion had meaning for everyone -- when everyone was American and your neighbor wasn't a Cambodian Buddhist, a Russian Jew, a Japanese Taoist and your son or daughter hadn't picked up some new religion like the Moonies. When sexuality and sex roles were simple -- men were men and women were girls, and nobody they knew was gay. People out there are scared. And they want the old time religion that had meaning and they want to go back to the time when everybody knew the rules. Well, it's that kind of time, and Jerry Falwell plays upon the fears of those people, and promises them "The Old Time Gospel Hour" and tells them who the enemy is (us), and they follow him, and he profits, and profits, and profits.

But maybe there's more to it than that. Durkheim was also talking about anomie being a condition for strangers and sojourners and for people in subcultures. Maybe there's something there for us, as well. Gay liberation has called us to come out -- it has asked us to change our ways and to trust God to help us find a way to be a new kind of gay people-- strong, and open, and fearless. And

SOOM AND DIGNITY TO BEGIN IN MOBILE

Efforts are being made to organize two new organizations for gay and Lesbian people in Mobile. According to John P., who is spearheading the drive, the Silver Owls of Mobile (SOOM) and a Dignity chapter are looking for persons interested in these groups.

SOOM is a social group for older people, usually over the age of 40, and for younger people who like to be with older gays and Lesbians.

Dignity is an organization for gay Catholics and their friends. The chapter will be part of the national organization that consists of over 117 chapters across the nation.

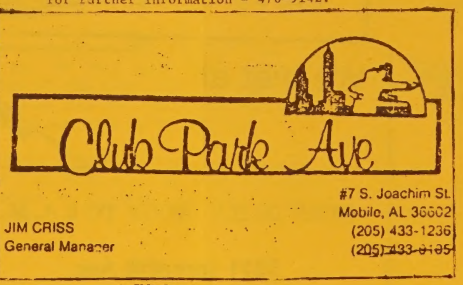
"Too often gay and Lesbian Catholics feel alienated from their church. Dignity has been successful in being a bridge for these people to rebuild a religious life. Also, Dignity has been effective in creating a dialogue with the church's hierarchy," said John P.

He noted that the SOOM organization is simply an attempt to bring people together in a social context. "Many older gays and Lesbians simply have no social place to go except the bars, where they are usually ignored by younger people. SOOM will be an attempt to provide a congenial group for dinner parties, theater and other outings.

Anyone interested in SOOM or Dignity is asked to contact John at 342-7891, or the HELPLINE at 476-9142.

FIRST NIGHTERS

People interested in going to theater: Involves joining Joe Jefferson Players ($25.00 for 6 plays/musicals) plus other theater presentations. Call HELPLINE for further information - 476-9142.



...from the pastor

maybe we, too, are like the Falwell followers. It was so secure in my closet. I was so comfortable hiding. I really don't need these new, frightening ideas of openness and liberation, do I? Oh, yes, you do. You need them for your mental health, you need them for your ability to be a whole person, you need them in a world of change, so that you can change with the world and not be stuck, as Saul was, in fear. Saul clung to the old gods, and could not trust Jahweh God -- and he lost. Most of us try the same thing. We stick to our old gods, our closetedness and our lies. God sees through us -- God knows who we are, and God loves us enough to invite us to be KING. Be all you can be, be the royal person God invites you to be. The alternative for far too many of us has been Saul's solution, suicide; the death of who we really are or can be. The gay community is growing up, and learning that in taking risks there is strength and growth. Don't be a Saul -- be a David. Take the risks -- and grow!

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I've often heard Rev. Marge quote her friend from Providence, Ray LaRiviere, who coined a phrase about gay attitudes, "As long as I can boogie, I'm free." A lot of us started out the same way. If it hadn't been for Gay/Lesbian bars, we would have had nothing. Work, a relationship, maybe -- and then party time at the bars. But heavens, don't ask me to meet your there before the sun went down.

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To many of you out there, "coming out" would be insane. For many it would be. The greatest day of my life, however, was when I became insane. Oh, I'd already come out to some very selected "straight" friends, having carefully tested the waters before ever diving. Heck, they already knew who I was anyway.

Things started changing the day I walked into the new MCC. Sweat poured down my back, fear gripped every part of my body. I made myself sit in the second pew from the front, another bold move for me. I looked behind me, and came face to face with an older "straight couple." I muttered some weird excuse (to whom I still don't know) and got up to leave. But I didn't.

I made it through the daylight. I made it through the service in God's house. I was introduced to the older couple and lived. Last week at Bruno's I happened to notice my attire and chuckled to myself. My MCC teeshirt looked quite nice! A couple of people gave me knowing smiles, but most of the shoppers paid no attention to me. Most of them, if they knew what an MCC was wouldn't have cared anyway. Most of your professional associates, your families, your straight friends probably know who you are right now. Some may not want the confrontation of being told, but many would welcome your openness and applaud your courage and honesty.

For years, a small minority ran my life. Now I'm in charge. IT FEELS GOOD!!!

October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
UU WORSHIP 10:30 AM ev. every Sunday	NOVEMBER 1st ROCKY HORROR SHOW AT ESQUIRE WITH OSIRIS	1	2 RAP; Who's on Top-- Power in Relationships.	3		FR'S ANNIVERSARY
6 MCC WORSHIP 7:00 P.M. 5:30 New Memb.	7	8	9 RAP: Peer Pressure - Handling your friends.	10	11	12 COLUMBUS DAY
13 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 3:00Shrimp Boil at DAVID'sII VOLLEYBALL	14 COLUMBUS DAY OBSERVED	15	16 RAP Cross-Generational Relationships	17	18 UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS 2-DAY WORKSHOP	19 "The Haunting Church"
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CLASSIFIED ADS

Weekend Sketch Group -- interested? Call the HELPLINE for information.

WRITERS GROUP -- Meet once a month for social contact and constructive criticism of members' work. Bring a piece of writing for criticism, and ke p a log of the number of hours spent wri ting. Contact Shirley L. at the HELPLINE.

BIKERS (no, silly, not that kind!) are being sought for a bike riding group. Ride, bring lunch and picnic-- weather will be perfect soon.

Halloween

FOR SALE: SCM Electric Typewriter, ribbon spool. Best offer. Evenings 8-10. 342-7891, ask for John.

PLUMBING - Indoors, reasonable rates. Expert service. Call evenings after 6, or Mondays, 476-5171, as for Harry.

CLEANING-INTERIOR PAINTING, WALLPAPER. Organize your precious collectibles?? Excellent references in both communities. 476-9142, ask for Shirley.

BOWLING LEAGUE -- Members of MCC want to form a bowling team to hopefully compete against other gay groups (bars, etc.). At least six teams are needed. Call the HELPLINE if you are interested.

SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.
433-9141

SUN. - THURS. 10 A. M. - 2 A.M.
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS

ESQUIRE
BAR & LOUNGE

— Phone 433-9175 —
Mon.-Fri. 9:30 a.m. Till
Sat. 9:30 a.m.-2a.m.
13 South Joachim St. Mobile, Ala.

The Metropolitan Community Church
AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD — MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA, Pastor — (205) 476-9142

Volume 1, No. 2 — October 1985

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART...

The veil of distaste and misconceptions surrounding the gay segment of the population is nowhere better illustrated than in the film, "God, Gays and the Gospel," a no-nonsense look at the rapid rise of the Metropolitan Community Church.

One of the most poignant plights of gay people in today's world is the denial of their right to worship by most of the traditional organized religions. Almost without exception the Christian faith has taken upon itself the right to refuse gays a part in the Family of God.

The long struggle by MCC founder Rev. Troy Perry to establish a faith, not just for gays but for anyone, is the focus of the film. In concise, to the point terms, the production addresses the sheer magnitude of the work being done and the forward strides being made by Perry and his legion of pastors and congregations.

Since its founding in 1969, MCC has endured everything from ridicule to bombings to burned-out church sanctuaries. More than 17 years later, Perry and his followers have forged a recognized, respected faith wherein all are welcomed. It is a tribute to the ecumenical and accepting nature of this church that 20 per cent of its members are non-gay. It is a true illustration of the overused, misused term, "real Christian people."

Perry, a transplanted Floridian, excluded from the church of his childhood, spent years berating himself as "unacceptable." In the end, he determined that there is no reason -- save for human bigotry and Biblical misinterpretation -- for gays to be denied a right to their faith. Nowhere in the Bible, he points out, is there condemnation of homosexuality as it is understood today. In one of his most moving sermons, he presents a stunning point: "If AIDS is God's "gift" to the homosexual, then is toxic shock syndrome God's "gift" to women for being female? ...or is Legionnaires' Disease God's "gift" to the American Legion for being too patriotic?

From the perspective of a "straight," the message of "God, Gays, and the Gospel" is very much to the point: No human deserves the right to tell another he or she will never be acceptable in the eyes of God. Moreover, it should be remembered that Perry et al are not working for immediate and total social acceptance, but for establishment of a climate of cooperation and understanding.

No "straight" who professes a concern for human rights should let gays bear this struggle alone.

(Note: N.J.Green is MCC at Mobile's "token straight," our assistant organist. Thank God for our "straight" friends.)

REMINDER

MCC MEMBERS-ATTENTION!
Congregational Meeting, October 27, following worship service. Election of officers, other important business, including coming into agreement with GSS changes.

FROM THE EDITOR--

Our first issue was a roaring success, so the community tells us. We personally wish to thank the bar owners and managers for making the newsletter a reality, rather than the "dream" so many of us have talked about for the last couple of years. At last we have a way to communicate ideas among gays in Mobile. We also want to apologize to Chuck at Troopers for omitting a news item last month. Thanks for bearing with us and our mistakes -- we'll get it right with practice. A word of thanks to all of you out there from the small group at MCC. Because of you the newsletter will continue to grow, to increase our awareness and to solidify the community.

To date we have received the names "Revelations," "Mobile Pride News," and "Genesis." Don't be bashful. Send or call in your suggestion.

We stated our purpose last month, "to offer a news source for the entire community." We are happy to report that this issue, our second, has accomplished that goal. Sincere applause to each organization and business for your participation. We are open to your suggestions and your criticism. Our new feature. "Community Profile" has already been designated for the November issue. Send in the name of someone you wish to acknowledge in a future issue.

Our editorial policy requires that a name and address be submitted along with newscopy. Your name and address will not be printed without your written consent, but we must have this information to protect the legal position of the church. Please drop editorial copy or editorial replies at the church or mail them to: MCC Newsletter, P.O. Box 8524, Mobile, Ala. 36608. The deadline for all copy is the Third Monday of the Month.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

NEWS FROM THE LESBIAN TASK FORCE OF NOW

Two important pieces of legislation are going to be brought to Congress in this year, NOW has informed us. One, is H.R. 230, the Federal Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights Legislation which is spearheaded by Representative Ted Weiss of Brooklyn, N.Y. and carries the endorsement of 44 other representatives, including Rep. Gerry Studds of Massachusetts, an openly gay legislator. The bill primarily calls for the insertion of the words, "affexional or sexual orientation," throughout the Civil Rights Act of 1964, following the word "color," and in other legislation, like the Equal opportunity Act, where it is inserted after "sex." thus identifying gay and Lesbian discrimination as equal to that against people of color and as pervasive as sexism. Interestingly, the same act speaks against acts of intimidation or violence against gays and Lesbians in the same passage that it speaks about violence against religious groups.

The other piece of legislation is the now infamous McCarran-Walter act, which prohibits certain people from entering the United States because of political or sexual orientation. Farley Mowat, the Canadian author of such dangerous books as the environmental study, "Never Cry Wolf," and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Colombia's Nobel Prize Winning novelist, were both excluded -- and refused to be singled out as special cases -- under this Act. Gay men and women can be refused entry into the U.S. -- and have been -- by the terms of the McCarran Act. It is important for the McCarran Act to not include gays and Lesbians under the heading of those accused of "moral turpitude."

The legislation above is entitled Immigration Exclusion and Deportation Amendments of 1985. The first is HR 230. Your congressional representative will vote on both of these. Make your wishes known. One letter -- one letter -- can make the difference, because very few letters on any subject are received from constituents, and as many as five or six letters can seem like an avalanche. If you are interested in how to write to Congress, call the HELPLINE for a copy of MCC's booklet, Writing to Congress, from MCC's Department of Christian Social Action.

Bulletin Board

ORDER OF OSIRIS - "The Rocky Horror Show" Friday and Saturday, November 1 and 2, Presented by the Order of Osiris and the Esquire House -- at the Esquire House. $5.00 admission. See an Osiris member or your bartender for tickets.

Less than 140 days to Osiris' 5th Anniversary Mardi Gras Ball, February 7, 1986.

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - Study series for 4 weeks on Men's Life and Men's Issues. Call the UU's at 342-6834 for information and starting date (near the end of the month.)

2-day Workshop -- The Haunting Church October 18 and 19 at the UU Fellowship 6345 Old Shell Road.

Volleyball -- every 2nd and 4th Sunday, at 2 P.M. at the UU's, weather permitting.

better gay than grumpy

TROOPERS - Shuffleboard tournaments every Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. Pool tournaments every Thursday at 8:30. Some of the best popcorn in Mobile.

CORRAL - Pool tournament every Monday at 9:00 p.m. Please watch for announcements of upcoming Halloween events.

CPA - Costume contest at midnight in conjunction with Hooker's Ball.

Free buffet every Sunday at 9:30 p.m.

Watch for "Name that Tune" to begin early NOvember on Sunday evenings.

DAVID'S II - Special Guest, Halloween Eve through Saturday, Carmen Del Rio.

First Sunday of October begins David's free buffet from 3-9 p.m., and the Tea Dance.

Shrimp boil, Sunday October 13th, from 3 til? To help raise funds for MCC's HELPLINE and newsletter. $3.00 cover, includes all the boiled shrimp you can eat, along with other goodies.

ESQUIRE - Rocky Horror Show November 1 and 2 at 9:30 p.m. Get your tickets from Esquire or any Osiris member. $5.00 per ticket.

PROFILE

Did you enjoy Mobile's Gay Pride 85? Our first profile is, Harry, organizer and leader of Pride 85. Harry was the catalyst that brought together the various elements of the community. It wasn't his first time out, certainly not his first effort for our benefit. Fifteen years in the Mobile area has seen Harry speaking at the University of South Alabama and Springhill College on Gay/Lesbian issues. He was one of the strong leaders of the old Gulf Alliance for Equality as well.

When Harry isn't working on our behalf, he enjoys meeting the public in his retail profession. While there's still daylight after a hard day at work, you might see him out bicycling or running, or on Sundays offering his talents at the Unitarian-Universalists' worship and fellowship. "My religion," Harry said, has given me a lot more direction in my life, and a greater sense of freedom to allow my own beliefs to evolve."

Harry offered the following thoughts about and reflections on Gay Pride'85: '85 was very successfull considering the late starting date for planning. '84, our first Gay Pride Activity, made '85 much easier to put together. Adding more organizations -- the UU's and MCC -- added much to '85's success. Without Danni B. '85 would not have come toether. A SPECIAL THANKS TO HER.

For 1986 Gay Pride, Harry foresees greatness. "For once, we are starting off with some money, $186.00, thanks to the bars. We will begin planning at a much earlier date, offering the same type of activities, with more variety, however. We will certainly push for more publicity and participation from all the organizations. We want Gay Pride to be financially self-supporting, and there's no reason it shouldn't be if we all work at it."

When asked what he would change if given the right opportunity, Harry offered the following: "I'd like to see more open Gay/Lesbian businesses, organizations, and individuals come out, and a greater media presence for the community. However, the fear of coming out is still our greatest obstacle. Most of us, including me, still face job discrimination, neighborhood harassment, and the possible loss of our families or their strong disapproval."

In a larger context, Harry went on, "Much of our recent publicity has been derogatory. I feel that the Moral Majority uses us as their biggest fundraiser, particularly now that AIDS has come to the forefront of the news media."

Harry is one of the strongest and most open figures in our Mobile Gay Community, and with his support and leadership, gay Mobile should reach the goals which he is helping us set.

SOCIETY LOUNGE -- Beginning in October, the first weekend each month, Miss Betty will be presenting weekend shows at 10 and 12 midnight. No cover.

SOMETHING TO SELL, SERVICE TO OFFER?? Call 476-9142 for rates and deadlines. Please NO PERSONALS, except Birthday, Anniversary, Thank You's.

TROOPERS
215 Conti Street
438-9139
HOURS: 11 a.m.-3 a.m.

CORRAL
54 So. Conception
433-9258
Weekdays - Noon Till
Weekends - 24 hours

THERE IS NO LONGER AN EXCUSE FOR SPREADING AIDS

Right now in the gay community, we're faced with some extremely difficult decisions because of AIDS -- sexual decisions affecting our lives and life-styles. We Gaymen have come up with a lot of excuses for avoiding the issue.

We all know that safer sex can reduce the risk of contracting and spreading AIDS. Some practices are more effective than others; some we have questions about.

We all need to make informed decisions, not excuses. You'll probably agree that none of the following excuses justify the pread of AIDS in our community:

"WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And it's the community's. Everyone must take a concerned and active role if we're going to stop the spread of this disease.

Here's another common excuse: "If someone doesn't ask me to practice safer sex, I figure that's his decision and I respect it."

Why? Aren't you concerned? Perhaps your partner is just as uncomfortable in raising the issue as you are.

"WHOSE LIFE IS IT, ANYWAY?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And the community's. The excuse, "It's my life," is only partly true. The life of your partner and the well-being of the community are also at stake.

AIDS is not just a physical problem. There are political, social, and economic effects as well. There is already evidence that social freedoms may be restricted because of AIDS. AIDS can be used as an excuse for anti-Gay action and legislation.

Making decisions about sexual practices is difficult. Sticking to those decisions is even more difficult. But this isn't a moral issue; it's a matter of life and death.

"CHANGING MY SEX LIFE ISN'T A CURE FOR AIDS."

That's true. There is no cure or vaccine. And researchers think they are years away from developing one. Safer sexual practices are our best means right now of reducing our risk and stopping the spread of AIDS.

"CHANGE? NOBODY ELSE IS DOING IT!"

The fact is that a major research project conducted by the AIDS Foundation among San Francisco Gaymen revealed that two-thirds of the Gay community is making a serious effort to reduce their risk by practicing safer sex. Two-thirds!

Talk about it. Even though its a difficult subject for everyone, chances are your partner is just as concerned as you are and would probably welcome a chance to discuss it.

Let's stop making excuses. Let's stop the spread of AIDS.

Reprinted from ACTS 29, Newsletter of [illegible]

Rectal gonorrhea has declined 86% since the AIDS scare -- people are aware of risks and are changing their sexual habits. Safe sex works.

Bulletin Board

HOOKER'S BALL - HALLOWEEN NIGHT -- Presented by all your favorite bars and the Order of Osiris. Prizes for costumes, all bars are involved, begins 7:00 p.m. Hallowe'en night, costumes are invited, and you are especially requested to attend this celebration of what is turning into the second most exciting activity of the year.

Birthdays

HAPPY BIRTHDAY - Queen Richard, Oct. 9, from all the folks at Esquire House.

Label JARS Not PEOPLE

ANNIVERSARY

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY - Oct. 5 to Chuck at Troopers on their 2nd Year of fun and support of the community.

HAPPY BELATED ANNIVERSARY TO CPA - We were not notified in time for publication last month, but CPA celebrated their 2nd anniversary on Sept. 27th. Great going, guys!

476-9142

Gay

Help-line

We met at

DAVID'S II

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985

from the fellowship

"FREE TO BE"

12TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF MCC

Sacramento, California. The conference got off to an exciting start. Rev. Elders Freda Smith and Nancy Wilson both preached Monday. I especially enjoyed hearing them. The film, "God, Gays, and the Gospel" was also shown for the first time on Monday.

The film, a documentary telling about MCC and what it means, cost about $100,000 to make. Many unique aspects of MCC were brought out. The fact that MCC has membrers from every religious background and the highest proportion of women ministers were particularly interesting.

In the business meetings, a great deal was accomplished in the first few days. The Government Structures and Systems proposal was accepted with some minor amendments. Two changes will have the most immediate impact. One is the adoption of the General Council as the governing body of MCC. The General Council will be composed of the Board of Directors and the District Coordinators, thus giving total regional representation at the highest MCC level. The other change is that there will be only commissioned and chartered churches (instead of the three tier system as previously: Study group, mission, chartered church.). At the conference I was an official observer, with a voice, but without vote. In the future, all delegates will have a vote. Each delegate will represent one hundred members or a portion of 100 if the church is smaller. This means that even the smallest church will have a voting delegate.

All of che elders standing for re-election were elected.

I had an opportunity to sing in the Conference Choir, and attended several workshops, including the Sexuality and Spirituality and Spiritual Gifts workshop.

R.P., Delegate

Check it Out

MCC is the largest Gay/Lesbian organization in the world.

NOW (Nat'l Organization for Women) offers insurance for "significant others" (not just physicians, but alternative medicine as well).

Jerry Falwell and his "Moral Majority" are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars across the country to stop Gay/Lesbian rights.

A local printer refused to print our first newsletter because of its content.

A local bank refused to open a joint bank account for a well-known Gay couple.

The Unitarian-Universalist Association openly supports Gay/Lesbian rights.

Mobile Mental Health has actively trained and offers continued support for the Gay Helpline volunteers.

The Gay Helpline is in operation every night from 6 p.m. to midnight for anyone needing someone to talk to -- check it out.

The local bar owners and managers -- Chuck, Miss Betty, Jim, John, Grace and David -- make the printing and mailing of this newsletter possible.

The bar owners and managers donated money and supplies for the kick-off party to celebrate the opening of the Helpline, and that we will be raising funds for the Helpline from time to time, due to their generosity.

...from the pastor

SAUL AND ANOMIE

In the late 1800's, the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, coined the word ANOMIE (without a name) to explain the psychological state of strangers, people at the edge of social movements with enormous change, and people who belonged to subcultures where they were unsure of what the social expectations were within a dominant group. They felt, as James Baldwin must have, like "nobody knows my name." As a matter of fact, in a true state of anomie, it's more like "I don't even know my own name." Durkheim postulated that when a society is experiencing great anomie, the suicide rate goes up. When I read of Saul, the first king of Israel in the Bible, I realized that even in Biblical times, people knew the concept of anomie, even though they didn't know the word.

Saul lived in an anomic time. He was a soldier who had been trained in the old skills of warfare before iron was invented. Suddenly, there was iron. And iron was so strong that all the weapons he had been taught to use were nearly useless. So he learned to use iron, but he was never comfortable with it. Then the people of his area learned about a new God, and all the things he was used to in the old gods were outdated. To add to his problems, Jahweh decided Saul should be king of Israel. Saul wasn't from a royal family (there weren't any royal families in Israel -- he was the first) and he didn't know how a king behaved, he'd never even had a king. But Jahweh had selected him to be king. And still worse, his son gets friendly with this David fellow -- and he knows there's something strange there -- but can that fellow play the harp! He wasn't even permitted to ask the seer what was going to happen, and feel secure, he had to trust this Jahweh God. Saul learned to adapt -- but he was never happy with the new ways, and when things really got tough, he looked to his old gods and went over to see the Witch of Endor to find out what the enemy had in store. That was where he and Jahweh God parted. Poor Saul. He was caught in a world he hardly understood! Everything was changing, nothing seemed to have a center. How he wished for the good old days, when the gods were secure, the military knew what they were doing, the country had the right kind of folk leading it, and people knew how to behave-- knew the rules. Saul was so confused, he hardly knew his own name any more. He was a real case of anomie. And eventually, he did what Durkheim postulated -- he committed suicide.

Can you see some parallels? Many people today feel that sense of anomie. The world has changed so rapidly that people are frightened. They want some sense of the past to hold on to. God, they pray, make it safe again, let me know what to expect! Many Christians are at that point. The world has changed so greatly that they are frightened. Nuclear energy, great social upheaval -- especially within the time of the baby boomers; new forms of government--like Communism and socialism -- scare them. The questioning of old beliefs and the arising of new ideas --all of these together are frightening for people who remember how simple it was when everybody knew what to expect. When the milk train stopped and the old time religion had meaning for everyone -- when everyone was American and your neighbor wasn't a Cambodian Buddhist, a Russian Jew, a Japanese Taoist and your son or daughter hadn't picked up some new religion like the Moonies. When sexuality and sex roles were simple -- men were men and women were girls, and nobody they knew was gay. People out there are scared. And they want the old time religion that had meaning and they want to go back to the time when everybody knew the rules. Well, it's that kind of time, and Jerry Falwell plays upon the fears of those people, and promises them "The Old Time Gospel Hour" and tells them who the enemy is (us), and they follow him, and he profits, and profits, and profits.

But maybe there's more to it than that. Durkheim was also talking about anomie being a condition for strangers and sojourners and for people in subcultures. Maybe there's something there for us, as well. Gay liberation has called us to come out -- it has asked us to change our ways and to trust God to help us find a way to be a new kind of gay people-- strong, and open, and fearless. And

WELCOME

SOOM AND DIGNITY TO BEGIN IN MOBILE

Efforts are being made to organize two new organizations for gay and Lesbian people in Mobile. According to John P., who is spearheading the drive, the Silver Owls of Mobile (SOOM) and a Dignity chapter are looking for persons interested in these groups.

SOOM is a social group for older people, usually over the age of 40, and for younger people who like to be with older gays and Lesbians.

Dignity is an organization for gay Catholics and their friends. The chapter will be part of the national organization that consists of over 117 chapters across the nation.

"Too often gay and Lesbian Catholics feel alienated from their church. Dignity has been successful in being a bridge for these people to rebuild a religious life. Also, Dignity has been effective in creating a dialogue with the church's hierarchy," said John P.

He noted that the SOOM organization is simply an attempt to bring people together in a social context. "Many older gays and Lesbians simply have no social place to go except the bars, where they are usually ignored by younger people. SOOM will be an attempt to provide a congenial group for dinner parties, theater and other outings.

Anyone interested in SOOM or Dignity is asked to contact John at 342-7891, or the HELPLINE at 476-9142.

FIRST NIGHTERS

People interested in going to theater: Involves joining Joe Jefferson Players ($25.00 for 6 plays/musicals) plus other theater presentations. Call HELPLINE for further information - 476-9142.

Club Park Ave

#7 S. Joachim St.
Mobile, AL 36602
(205) 433-1236
(205) 433-9185

JIM CRISS
General Manager

...from the pastor

maybe we, too, are like the Falwell followers. It was so secure in my closet. I was so comfortable hiding. I really don't need these new, frightening ideas of openness and liberation, do I? Oh, yes, you do. You need them for your mental health, you need them for your ability to be a whole person, you need them in a world of change, so that you can change with the world and not be stuck, as Saul was, in fear. Saul clung to the old gods, and could not trust Jahweh God -- and he lost. Most of us try the same thing. We stick to our old gods, our closetedness and our lies. God sees through us -- God knows who we are, and God loves us enough to invite us to be KING. Be all you can be, be the royal person God invites you to be. The alternative for far too many of us has been Saul's solution, suicide; the death of who we really are or can be. The gay community is growing up, and learning that in taking risks there is strength and growth. Don't be a Saul -- be a David. Take the risks -- and grow!

COMING OUT

I've often heard Rev. Marge quote her friend from Providence, Ray LaRiviere, who coined a phrase about gay attitudes, "As long as I can boogie, I'm free." A lot of us started out the same way. If it hadn't been for Gay/Lesbian bars, we would have had nothing. Work, a relationship, maybe -- and then party time at the bars. But heavens, don't ask me to meet your there before the sun went down.

We remain in our closets, doing nothing, hoping and sometimes even praying that no one ever discovers who we "really are." From birth, almost, we are conditioned that to be Gay/Lesbian is a fate worse than death. So we hide and we die a thousand deaths each day. And then one day something wakes us up and we come face to face with years of playing "straight" games. The roles we adopted are unbelievable and staggering, not to mention the toll oppression has taken on our lives.

Sane or insane? The medical world finally realized our sexual preferences had nothing to do with our sanity. Yet, many of our people have difficulty making it through life. Many suffer dependency problems -- sexual, drug, alcohol -- many are emotionally crippled by "oppression sickness." They really don't remain sane in world that tries to crush them.

To many of you out there, "coming out" would be insane. For many it would be. The greatest day of my life, however, was when I became insane. Oh, I'd already come out to some very selected "straight" friends, having carefully tested the waters before ever diving. Heck, they already knew who I was anyway.

Things started changing the day I walked into the new MCC. Sweat poured down my back, fear gripped every part of my body. I made myself sit in the second pew from the front, another bold move for me. I looked behind me, and came face to face with an older "straight couple." I muttered some weird excuse (to whom I still don't know) and got up to leave. But I didn't.

I made it through the daylight. I made it through the service in God's house. I was introduced to the older couple and lived. Last week at Bruno's I happened to notice my attire and chuckled to myself. My MCC teeshirt looked quite nice! A couple of people gave me knowing smiles, but most of the shoppers paid no attention to me. Most of them, if they knew what an MCC was wouldn't have cared anyway. Most of your professional associates, your families, your straight friends probably know who you are right now. Some may not want the confrontation of being told, but many would welcome your openness and applaud your courage and honesty.

For years, a small minority ran my life. Now I'm in charge. IT FEELS GOOD!!!

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PLUMBING - Indoors, reasonable rates. Expert service. Call evenings after 6, or Mondays, 476-5171, as for Harry.

CLEANING-INTERIOR PAINTING, WALLPAPER. Organize your precious collectibles?? Excellent references in both communities. 476-9142, ask for Shirley.

BOWLING LEAGUE -- Members of MCC want to form a bowling team to hopefully compete against other gay groups (bars, etc.). At least six teams are needed. Call the HELPLINE if you are interested.

SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.
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SUN. - THURS. 10 A. M. - 2 A.M.
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The Metropolitan Community Church
AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD — MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA
Pastor — (205) 476-9142

Volume 1, No. 2 — October 1985

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART...

The veil of distaste and misconceptions surrounding the gay segment of the population is nowhere better illustrated than in the film, "God, Gays and the Gospel," a no-nonsense look at the rapid rise of the Metropolitan Community Church.

One of the most poignant plights of gay people in today's world is the denial of their right to worship by most of the traditional organized religions. Almost without exception the Christian faith has taken upon itself the right to refuse gays a part in the Family of God.

The long struggle by MCC founder Rev. Troy Perry to establish a faith, not just for gays but for anyone, is the focus of the film. In concise, to the point terms, the production addresses the sheer magnitude of the work being done and the forward strides being made by Perry and his legion of pastors and congregations.

Since its founding in 1969, MCC has endured everything from ridicule to bombings to burned-out church sanctuaries. More than 17 years later, Perry and his followers have forged a recognized, respected faith wherein all are welcomed. It is a tribute to the ecumenical and accepting nature of this church that 20 per cent of its members are non-gay. It is a true illustration of the overused, misused term, "real Christian people."

Perry, a transplanted Floridian, excluded from the church of his childhood, spent years berating himself as "unacceptable." In the end, he determined that there is no reason -- save for human bigotry and Biblical misinterpretation -- for gays to be denied a right to their faith. Nowhere in the Bible, he points out, is there condemnation of homosexuality as it is understood today. In one of his most moving sermons, he presents a stunning point: "If AIDS is God's "gift" to the homosexual, then is toxic shock syndrome God's "gift" to women for being female? ...or is Legionnaires' Disease God's "gift" to the American Legion for being too patriotic?

From the perspective of a "straight," the message of "God, Gays, and the Gospel" is very much to the point: No human deserves the right to tell another he or she will never be acceptable in the eyes of God. Moreover, it should be remembered that Perry et al are not working for immediate and total social acceptance, but for establishment of a climate of cooperation and understanding.

No "straight" who professes a concern for human rights should let gays bear this struggle alone.

(Note: N.J.Green is MCC at Mobile's "token straight," our assistant organist. Thank God for our "straight" friends.)

REMINDER

MCC MEMBERS-ATTENTION!
Congregational Meeting, October 27, following worship service. Election of officers, other important business, including coming into agreement with GSS changes.

FROM THE EDITOR--

Our first issue was a roaring success, so the community tells us. We personally wish to thank the bar owners and managers for making the newsletter a reality, rather than the "dream" so many of us have talked about for the last couple of years. At last we have a way to communicate ideas among gays in Mobile. We also want to apologize to Chuck at Troopers for omitting a news item last month. Thanks for bearing with us and our mistakes -- we'll get it right with practice. A word of thanks to all of you out there from the small group at MCC. Because of you the newsletter will continue to grow, to increase our awareness and to solidify the community.

To date we have received the names "Revelations," "Mobile Pride News," and "Genesis." Don't be bashful. Send or call in your suggestion.

We stated our purpose last month, "to offer a news source for the entire community." We are happy to report that this issue, our second, has accomplished that goal. Sincere applause to each organization and business for your participation. We are open to your suggestions and your criticism. Our new feature, "Community Profile" has already been designated for the November issue. Send in the name of someone you wish to acknowledge in a future issue.

Our editorial policy requires that a name and address be submitted along with newscopy. Your name and address will not be printed without your written consent, but we must have this information to protect the legal position of the church. Please drop editorial copy or editorial replies at the church or mail them to: MCC Newsletter, P.O. Box 8524, Mobile, Ala. 36608. The deadline for all copy is the Third Monday of the Month.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

NEWS FROM THE LESBIAN TASK FORCE OF NOW

Two important pieces of legislation are going to be brought to Congress in this year, NOW has informed us. One, is H.R. 230, the Federal Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights Legislation which is spearheaded by Representative Ted Weiss of Brooklyn, N.Y. and carries the endorsement of 44 other representatives, including Rep. Gerry Studds of Massachusetts, an openly gay legislator. The bill primarily calls for the insertion of the words, "affexional or sexual orientation," throughout the Civil Rights Act of 1964, following the word "color," and in other legislation, like the Equal opportunity Act, where it is inserted after "sex." thus identifying gay and Lesbian discrimination as equal to that against people of color and as pervasive as sexism. Interestingly, the same act speaks against acts of intimidation or violence against gays and Lesbians in the same passage that it speaks about violence against religious groups.

The other piece of legislation is the now infamous McCarran-Walter act, which prohibits certain people from entering the United States because of political or sexual orientation. Farley Mowat, the Canadian author of such dangerous books as the environmental study, "Never Cry Wolf," and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Colombia's Nobel Prize Winning novelist, were both excluded -- and refused to be singled out as special cases -- under this Act. Gay men and women can be refused entry into the U.S. -- and have been -- by the terms of the McCarran Act. It is important for the McCarran Act to not include gays and Lesbians under the heading of those accused of "moral turpitude."

The legislation above is entitled Immigration Exclusion and Deportation Amendments of 1985. The first is HR 230. Your congressional representative will vote on both of these. Make your wishes known. One letter -- one letter -- can make the difference, because very few letters on any subject are received from constituents, and as many as five or six letters can seem like an avalanche. If you are interested in how to write to Congress, call the HELPLINE for a copy of MCC's booklet, Writing to Congress, from MCC's Department of Christian Social Action.

Bulletin Board

ORDER OF OSIRIS - "The Rocky Horror Show" Friday and Saturday, November 1 and 2, Presented by the Order of Osiris and the Esquire House -- at the Esquire House. $5.00 admission. See an Osiris member or your bartender for tickets.

Less than 140 days to Osiris' 5th Anniversary Mardi Gras Ball, February 7, 1986.

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - Study series for 4 weeks on Men's Life and Men's Issues. Call the UU's at 342-6834 for information and starting date (near the end of the month.)

2-day Workshop -- The Haunting Church October 18 and 19 at the UU Fellowship 6345 Old Shell Road.

Volleyball -- every 2nd and 4th Sunday, at 2 P.M. at the UU's, weather permitting.

better gay than grumpy

TROOPERS - Shuffleboard tournaments every Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. Pool tournaments every Thursday at 8:30. Some of the best popcorn in Mobile.

CORRAL - Pool tournament every Monday at 9:00 p.m. Please watch for announcements of upcoming Halloween events.

CPA - Costume contest at midnight in conjunction with Hooker's Ball.

Free buffet every Sunday at 9:30 p.m.

Watch for "Name that Tune" to begin early NOvember on Sunday evenings.

DAVID'S II - Special Guest, Halloween Eve through Saturday, Carmen Del Rio.

First Sunday of October begins David's free buffet from 3-9 p.m., and the Tea Dance.

Shrimp boil, Sunday October 13th, from 3 til? To help raise funds for MCC's HELPLINE and newsletter. $3.00 cover, includes all the boiled shrimp you can eat, along with other goodies.

ESQUIRE - Rocky Horror Show November 1 and 2 at 9:30 p.m. Get your tickets from Esquire or any Osiris member. $5.00 per ticket.

PROFILE

Did you enjoy Mobile's Gay Pride 85? Our first profile is, Harry, organizer and leader of Pride 85. Harry was the catalyst that brought together the various elements of the community. It wasn't his first time out, certainly not his first effort for our benefit. Fifteen years in the Mobile area has seen Harry speaking at the University of South Alabama and Springhill College on Gay/Lesbian issues. He was one of the strong leaders of the old Gulf Alliance for Equality as well.

When Harry isn't working on our behalf, he enjoys meeting the public in his retail profession. While there's still daylight after a hard day at work, you might see him out bicycling or running, or on Sundays offering his talents at the Unitarian-Universalists' worship and fellowship. "My religion," Harry said, has given me a lot more direction in my life, and a greater sense of freedom to allow my own beliefs to evolve."

Harry offered the following thoughts about and reflections on Gay Pride'85: '85 was very successfull considering the late starting date for planning. '84, our first Gay Pride Activity, made '85 much easier to put together. Adding more organizations -- the UU's and MCC -- added much to '85's success. Without Danni B. '85 would not have come toether. A SPECIAL THANKS TO HER.

For 1986 Gay Pride, Harry foresees greatness. "For once, we are starting off with some money, $186.00, thanks to the bars. We will begin planning at a much earlier date, offering the same type of activities, with more variety, however. We will certainly push for more publicity and participation from all the organizations. We want Gay Pride to be financially self-supporting, and there's no reason it shouldn't be if we all work at it."

When asked what he would change if given the right opportunity, Harry offered the following: "I'd like to see more open Gay/Lesbian businesses, organizations, and individuals come out, and a greater media presence for the community. However, the fear of coming out is still our greatest obstacle. Most of us, including me, still face job discrimination, neighborhood harassment, and the possible loss of our families or their strong disapproval."

In a larger context, Harry went on, "Much of our recent publicity has been derogatory. I feel that the Moral Majority uses us as their biggest fundraiser, particularly now that AIDS has come to the forefront of the news media."

Harry is one of the strongest and most open figures in our Mobile Gay Community, and with his support and leadership, gay Mobile should reach the goals which he is helping us set.

SOCIETY LOUNGE - Beginning in October, the first weekend each month, Miss Betty will be presenting weekend shows at 10 and 12 midnight. No cover.

SOMETHING TO SELL, SERVICE TO OFFER?? Call 476-9142 for rates and deadlines. Please NO PERSONALS, except Birthday, Anniversary, Thank You's.

TROOPERS
215 Conti Street
438-9139
HOURS: 11 a.m.-3 a.m.

CORRAL
54 So. Conception
433-9258
Weekdays - Noon Till
Weekends - 24 hours

THERE IS NO LONGER AN EXCUSE FOR SPREADING AIDS

Right now in the gay community, we're faced with some extremely difficult decisions because of AIDS -- sexual decisions affecting our lives and life-styles. We Gaymen have come up with a lot of excuses for avoiding the issue.

We all know that safer sex can reduce the risk of contracting and spreading AIDS. Some practices are more effective than others; some we have questions about.

We all need to make informed decisions, not excuses. You'll probably agree that none of the following excuses justify the pread of AIDS in our community:

"WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And it's the community's. Everyone must take a concerned and active role if we're going to stop the spread of this disease.

Here's another common excuse: "If someone doesn't ask me to practice safer sex, I figure that's his decision and I respect it."

Why? Aren't you concerned? Perhaps your partner is just as uncomfortable in raising the issue as you are.

"WHOSE LIFE IS IT, ANYWAY?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And the community's. The excuse, "It's my life," is only partly true. The life of your partner and the well-being of the community are also at stake.

AIDS is not just a physical problem. There are political, social, and economic effects as well. There is already evidence that social freedoms may be restricted because of AIDS. AIDS can be used as an excuse for anti-Gay action and legislation.

Making decisions about sexual practices is difficult. Sticking to those decisions is even more difficult. But this isn't a moral issue; it's a matter of life and death.

"CHANGING MY SEX LIFE ISN"T A CURE FOR AIDS."

That's true. There is no cure or vaccine. And researchers think they are years away from developing one. Safer sexual practices are our best means right now of reducing our risk and stopping the spread of AIDS.

"CHANGE? NOBODY ELSE IS DOING IT!"

The fact is that a major research project conducted by the AIDS Foundation among San Francisco Gaymen revealed that two-thirds of the Gay community is making a serious effort to reduce their risk by practicing safer sex. Two-thirds!

Talk about it. Even though its a difficult subject for everyone, chances are your partner is just as concerned as you are and would probably welcome a chance to discuss it.

Let's stop making excuses. Let's stop the spread of AIDS.

Reprinted from ACTS 29, Newsletter of [illegible]

Rectal gonorrhea has declined 86% since the AIDS scare -- people are aware of risks and are changing their sexual habits. Safe sex works.

Bulletin Board

HOOKER'S BALL - HALLOWEEN NIGHT -- Presented by all your favorite bars and the Order of Osiris. Prizes for costumes, all bars are involved, begins 7:00 p.m. Hallowe'en night, costumes are invited, and you are especially requested to attend this celebration of what is turning into the second most exciting activity of the year.

Label JARS Not PEOPLE

Birthdays

HAPPY BIRTHDAY - Queen Richard, Oct.9, from all the folks at Esquire House.

ANNIVERSARY

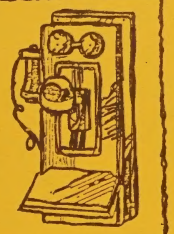
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY - Oct. 5 to Chuck at Troopers on their 2nd Year of fun and support of the community.

HAPPY BELATED ANNIVERSARY TO CPA - We were not notified in time for publication last month, but CPA celebrated their 2nd anniversary on Sept. 27th. Great going, guys!

476-9142

Gay

Help-line



We met at

DAVID'S II

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985

from the fellowship

"FREE TO BE"

12TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF MCC

Sacramento, California. The conference got off to an exciting start. Rev. Elders Freda Smith and Nancy Wilson both preached Monday. I especially enjoyed hearing them. The film, "God, Gays, and the Gospel" was also shown for the first time on Monday.

The film, a documentary telling about MCC and what it means, cost about $100,000 to make. Many unique aspects of MCC were brought out. The fact that MCC has membrers from every religious background and the highest proportion of women ministers were particularly interesting.

In the business meetings, a great deal was accomplished in the first few days. The Government Structures and Systems proposal was accepted with some minor amendments. Two changes will have the most immediate impact. One is the adoption of the General Council as the governing body of MCC. The General Council will be composed of the Board of Directors and the District Coordinators, thus giving total regional representation at the highest MCC level. The other change is that there will be only commissioned and chartered churches (instead of the three tier system as previously: Study group, mission, chartered church.). At the conference I was an official observer, with a voice, but without vote. In the future, all delegates will have a vote. Each delegate will represent one hundred members or a portion of 100 if the church is smaller. This means that even the smallest church will have a voting delegate.

All of che elders standing for re-election were elected.

I had an opportunity to sing in the Conference Choir, and attended several workshops, including the Sexuality and Spirituality and Spiritual Gifts workshop.

R.P., Delegate

Check it Out

MCC is the largest Gay/Lesbian organization in the world.

NOW (Nat'l Organization for Women) offers insurance for "significant others" (not just physicians, but alternative medicine as well).

Jerry Falwell and his "Moral Majority" are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars across the country to stop Gay/Lesbian rights.

A local printer refused to print our first newsletter because of its content.

A local bank refused to open a joint bank account for a well-known Gay couple.

The Unitarian-Universalist Association openly supports Gay/Lesbian rights.

Mobile Mental Health has actively trained and offers continued support for the Gay Helpline volunteers.

The Gay Helpline is in operation every night from 6 p.m. to midnight for anyone needing someone to talk to -- check it out.

The local bar owners and managers -- Chuck, Miss Betty, Jim, John, Grace and David -- make the printing and mailing of this newsletter possible.

The bar owners and managers donated money and supplies for the kick-off party to celebrate the opening of the Helpline, and that we will be raising funds for the Helpline from time to time, due to their generosity.

...from the pastor

SAUL AND ANOMIE

In the late 1800's, the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, coined the word ANOMIE (without a name) to explain the psychological state of strangers, people at the edge of social movements with enormous change, and people who belonged to subcultures where they were unsure of what the social expectations were within a dominant group. They felt, as James Baldwin must have, like "nobody knows my name." As a matter of fact, in a true state of anomie, it's more like "I don't even know my own name." Durkheim postulated that when a society is experiencing great anomie, the suicide rate goes up. When I read of Saul, the first king of Israel in the Bible, I realized that even in Biblical times, people knew the concept of anomie, even though they didn't know the word.

Saul lived in an anomic time. He was a soldier who had been trained in the old skills of warfare before iron was invented. Suddenly, there was iron. And iron was so strong that all the weapons he had been taught to use were nearly useless. So he learned to use iron, but he was never comfortable with it. Then the people of his area learned about a new God, and all the things he was used to in the old gods were outdated. To add to his problems, Jahweh decided Saul should be king of Israel. Saul wasn't from a royal family (there weren't any royal families in Israel -- he was the first) and he didn't know how a king behaved, he'd never even had a king. But Jahweh had selected him to be king. And still worse, his son gets friendly with this David fellow -- and he knows there's something strange there -- but can that fellow play the harp! He wasn't even permitted to ask the seer what was going to happen, and feel secure, he had to trust this Jahweh God. Saul learned to adapt -- but he was never happy with the new ways, and when things really got tough, he looked to his old gods and went over to see the Witch of Endor to find out what the enemy had in store. That was where he and Jahweh God parted. Poor Saul. He was caught in a world he hardly understood! Everything was changing, nothing seemed to have a center. How he wished for the good old days, when the gods were secure, the military knew what they were doing, the country had the right kind of folk leading it, and people knew how to behave-- knew the rules. Saul was so confused, he hardly knew his own name any more. He was a real case of anomie. And eventually, he did what Durkheim postulated -- he committed suicide.

Can you see some parallels? Many people today feel that sense of anomie. The world has changed so rapidly that people are frightened. They want some sense of the past to hold on to. God, they pray, make it safe again, let me know what to expect! Many Christians are at that point. The world has changed so greatly that they are frightened. Nuclear energy, great social upheaval -- especially within the time of the baby boomers; new forms of government--like Communism and socialism -- scare them. The questioning of old beliefs and the arising of new ideas --all of these together are frightening for people who remember how simple it was when everybody knew what to expect. When the milk train stopped and the old time religion had meaning for everyone -- when everyone was American and your neighbor wasn't a Cambodian Buddhist, a Russian Jew, a Japanese Taoist and your son or daughter hadn't picked up some new religion like the Moonies. When sexuality and sex roles were simple -- men were men and women were girls, and nobody they knew was gay. People out there are scared. And they want the old time religion that had meaning and they want to go back to the time when everybody knew the rules. Well, it's that kind of time, and Jerry Falwell plays upon the fears of those people, and promises them "The Old Time Gospel Hour" and tells them who the enemy is (us), and they follow him, and he profits, and profits, and profits.

But maybe there's more to it than that. Durkheim was also talking about anomie being a condition for strangers and sojourners and for people in subcultures. Maybe there's something there for us, as well. Gay liberation has called us to come out -- it has asked us to change our ways and to trust God to help us find a way to be a new kind of gay people-- strong, and open, and fearless. And

SOOM AND DIGNITY TO BEGIN IN MOBILE

Efforts are being made to organize two new organizations for gay and Lesbian people in Mobile. According to John P., who is spearheading the drive, the Silver Owls of Mobile (SOOM) and a Dignity chapter are looking for persons interested in these groups.

SOOM is a social group for older people, usually over the age of 40, and for younger people who like to be with older gays and Lesbians.

Dignity is an organization for gay Catholics and their friends. The chapter will be part of the national organization that consists of over 117 chapters across the nation.

"Too often gay and Lesbian Catholics feel alienated from their church. Dignity has been successful in being a bridge for these people to rebuild a religious life. Also, Dignity has been effective in creating a dialogue with the church's hierarchy," said John P.

He noted that the SOOM organization is simply an attempt to bring people together in a social context. "Many older gays and Lesbians simply have no social place to go except the bars, where they are usually ignored by younger people. SOOM will be an attempt to provide a congenial group for dinner parties, theater and other outings.

Anyone interested in SOOM or Dignity is asked to contact John at 342-7891, or the HELPLINE at 476-9142.

FIRST NIGHTERS

People interested in going to theater: Involves joining Joe Jefferson Players ($25.00 for 6 plays/musicals) plus other theater presentations. Call HELPLINE for further information - 476-9142.

Club Park Ave

#7 S. Joachim St.
Mobile, AL 36602
(205) 433-1236
(205) 433-8185

JIM CRISS
General Manager

...from the pastor

maybe we, too, are like the Falwell followers. It was so secure in my closet. I was so comfortable hiding. I really don't need these new, frightening ideas of openness and liberation, do I? Oh, yes, you do. You need them for your mental health, you need them for your ability to be a whole person, you need them in a world of change, so that you can change with the world and not be stuck, as Saul was, in fear. Saul clung to the old gods, and could not trust Jahweh God -- and he lost. Most of us try the same thing. We stick to our old gods, our closetedness and our lies. God sees through us -- God knows who we are, and God loves us enough to invite us to be KING. Be all you can be, be the royal person God invites you to be. The alternative for far too many of us has been Saul's solution, suicide; the death of who we really are or can be. The gay community is growing up, and learning that in taking risks there is strength and growth. Don't be a Saul -- be a David. Take the risks -- and grow!

COMING OUT

I've often heard Rev. Marge quote her friend from Providence, Ray LaRiviere, who coined a phrase about gay attitudes, "As long as I can boogie, I'm free." A lot of us started out the same way. If it hadn't been for Gay/Lesbian bars, we would have had nothing. Work, a relationship, maybe -- and then party time at the bars. But heavens, don't ask me to meet your there before the sun went down.

We remain in our closets, doing nothing, hoping and sometimes even praying that no one ever discovers who we "really are." From birth, almost, we are conditioned that to be Gay/Lesbian is a fate worse than death. So we hide and we die a thousand deaths each day. And then one day something wakes us up and we come face to face with years of playing "straight" games. The roles we adopted are unbelievable and staggering, not to mention the toll oppression has taken on our lives.

Sane or insane? The medical world finally realized our sexual preferences had nothing to do with our sanity. Yet, many of our people have difficulty making it through life. Many suffer dependency problems -- sexual, drug, alcohol -- many are emotionally crippled by "oppression sickness." They really don't remain sane in world that tries to crush them.

To many of you out there, "coming out" would be insane. For many it would be. The greatest day of my life, however, was when I became insane. Oh, I'd already come out to some very selected "straight" friends, having carefully tested the waters before ever diving. Heck, they already knew who I was anyway.

Things started changing the day I walked into the new MCC. Sweat poured down my back, fear gripped every part of my body. I made myself sit in the second pew from the front, another bold move for me. I looked behind me, and came face to face with an older "straight couple." I muttered some weird excuse (to whom I still don't know) and got up to leave. But I didn't.

I made it through the daylight. I made it through the service in God's house. I was introduced to the older couple and lived. Last week at Bruno's I happened to notice my attire and chuckled to myself. My MCC teeshirt looked quite nice! A couple of people gave me knowing smiles, but most of the shoppers paid no attention to me. Most of them, if they knew what an MCC was wouldn't have cared anyway. Most of your professional associates, your families, your straight friends probably know who you are right now. Some may not want the confrontation of being told, but many would welcome your openness and applaud your courage and honesty.

For years, a small minority ran my life. Now I'm in charge. IT FEELS GOOD!!!

October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
UU WORSHIP 10:30 AM ev. every Sunday	NOVEMBER 1982 ROCKY HORROR SHOW AT ESQUIRE WITH OSTRIS	1	2 RAP; Who's on Top-- Power in Relationships.	3		ER'S ANNIVERSARY
6 MCC WORSHIP 7:00 P.M. 5:30 New Memb.	7	8	9 RAP: Peer Pressure - Handling your friends.	10	11	12 COLUMBUS DAY
13 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 3:00 Shrimp Boil at DAVID'S!! UU VOLLEYBALL	14 COLUMBUS DAY OBSERVED	15	16 RAP Cross-Generational Relationships	17	18 UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS 2-DAY WORKSHOP	19 "The Haunting Church"
20 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 5:30 New Memb	21	22	23 RAP HOLDING HANDS Making a political statement.	24	25	26
27 MCC WORSHIP-7pm UU VOLLEYBALL 5:30 New Memb MOTHER-IN-LAW DAY	28	29	30 RAP HOMOPHOBIA -- THEIRS AND OURS	31 HOOKER'S BALL ALL THE BARS HALLOWEEN		

CLASSIFIED ADS

Weekend Sketch Group -- interested? Call the HELPLINE for information.

WRITERS GROUP -- Meet once a month for social contact and constructive criticism of members' work. Bring a piece of writing for criticism, and ke p a log of the number of hours spent writing. Contact Shirley L. at the HELPLINE.

BIKERS (no, silly, not that kind!) are being sought for a bike riding group. Ride, bring lunch and picnic-- weather will be perfect soon.

Halloween

FOR SALE: SCM Electric Typewriter, ribbon spool. Best offer. Evenings 8-10. 342-7891, ask for John.

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Volume 1, No. 2 — October 1985

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Perry, a transplanted Floridian, excluded from the church of his childhood, spent years berating himself as "unacceptable." In the end, he determined that there is no reason -- save for human bigotry and Biblical misinterpretation -- for gays to be denied a right to their faith. Nowhere in the Bible, he points out, is there condemnation of homosexuality as it is understood today. In one of his most moving sermons, he presents a stunning point: "If AIDS is God's "gift" to the homosexual, then is toxic shock syndrome God's "gift" to women for being female? ...or is Legionnaires' Disease God's "gift" to the American Legion for being too patriotic?

From the perspective of a "straight," the message of "God, Gays, and the Gospel" is very much to the point: No human deserves the right to tell another he or she will never be acceptable in the eyes of God. Moreover, it should be remembered that Perry et al are not working for immediate and total social acceptance, but for establishment of a climate of cooperation and understanding.

No "straight" who professes a concern for human rights should let gays bear this struggle alone.

(Note: N.J.Green is MCC at Mobile's "token straight," our assistant organist. Thank God for our "straight" friends.)

REMINDER

MCC MEMBERS-ATTENTION!

Congregational Meeting, October 27, following worship service. Election of officers, other important business, including coming into agreement with GSS changes.

FROM THE EDITOR--

Our first issue was a roaring success, so the community tells us. We personally wish to thank the bar owners and managers for making the newsletter a reality, rather than the "dream" so many of us have talked about for the last couple of years. At last we have a way to communicate ideas among gays in Mobile. We also want to apologize to Chuck at Troopers for omitting a news item last month. Thanks for bearing with us and our mistakes -- we'll get it right with practice. A word of thanks to all of you out there from the small group at MCC. Because of you the newsletter will continue to grow, to increase our awareness and to solidify the community.

To date we have received the names "Revelations," "Mobile Pride News," and "Genesis." Don't be bashful. Send or call in your suggestion.

We stated our purpose last month, "to offer a news source for the entire community." We are happy to report that this issue, our second, has accomplished that goal. Sincere applause to each organization and business for your participation. We are open to your suggestions and your criticism. Our new feature. "Community Profile" has already been designated for the November issue. Send in the name of someone you wish to acknowledge in a future issue.

Our editorial policy requires that a name and address be submitted along with newscopy. Your name and address will not be printed without your written consent, but we must have this information to protect the legal position of the church. Please drop editorial copy or editorial replies at the church or mail them to: MCC Newsletter, P.O. Box 8524, Mobile, Ala. 36608. The deadline for all copy is the Third Monday of the Month.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

NEWS FROM THE LESBIAN TASK FORCE OF NOW

Two important pieces of legislation are going to be brought to Congress in this year, NOW has informed us. One, is H.R. 230, the Federal Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights Legislation which is spearheaded by Representative Ted Weiss of Brooklyn, N.Y. and carries the endorsement of 44 other representatives, including Rep. Gerry Studds of Massachusetts, an openly gay legislator. The bill primarily calls for the insertion of the words, "affexional or sexual orientation," throughout the Civil Rights Act of 1964, following the word "color," and in other legislation, like the Equal opportunity Act, where it is inserted after "sex." thus identifying gay and Lesbian discrimination as equal to that against people of color and as pervasive as sexism. Interestingly, the same act speaks against acts of intimidation or violence against gays and Lesbians in the same passage that it speaks about violence against religious groups.

The other piece of legislation is the now infamous McCarran-Walter act, which prohibits certain people from entering the United States because of political or sexual orientation. Farley Mowat, the Canadian author of such dangerous books as the environmental study, "Never Cry Wolf," and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Colombia's Nobel Prize Winning novelist, were both excluded -- and refused to be singled out as special cases -- under this Act. Gay men and women can be refused entry into the U.S. -- and have been -- by the terms of the McCarran Act. It is important for the McCarran Act to not include gays and Lesbians under the heading of those accused of "moral turpitude."

The legislation above is entitled Immigration Exclusion and Deportation Amendments of 1985. The first is HR 230. Your congressional representative will vote on both of these. Make your wishes known. One letter -- one letter -- can make the difference, because very few letters on any subject are received from constituents, and as many as five or six letters can seem like an avalanche. If you are interested in how to write to Congress, call the HELPLINE for a copy of MCC's booklet, Writing to Congress, from MCC's Department of Christian Social Action.

Bulletin Board

ORDER OF OSIRIS - "The Rocky Horror Show" Friday and Saturday, November 1 and 2, Presented by the Order of Osiris and the Esquire House -- at the Esquire House. $5.00 admission. See an Osiris member or your bartender for tickets.

Less than 140 days to Osiris' 5th Anniversary Mardi Gras Ball, February 7, 1986.

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - Study series for 4 weeks on Men's Life and Men's Issues. Call the UU's at 342-6834 for information and starting date (near the end of the month.)

2-day Workshop -- The Haunting Church October 18 and 19 at the UU Fellowship 6345 Old Shell Road.

Volleyball -- every 2nd and 4th Sunday, at 2 P.M. at the UU's, weather permitting.

better gay than grumpy

TROOPERS - Shuffleboard tournaments every Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. Pool tournaments every Thursday at 8:30. Some of the best popcorn in Mobile.

CORRAL - Pool tournament every Monday at 9:00 p.m. Please watch for announcements of upcoming Halloween events.

CPA - Costume contest at midnight in conjunction with Hooker's Ball.

Free buffet every Sunday at 9:30 p.m.

Watch for "Name that Tune" to begin early NOvember on Sunday evenings.

DAVID'S II - Special Guest, Halloween Eve through Saturday, Carmen Del Rio.

First Sunday of October begins David's free buffet from 3-9 p.m., and the Tea Dance.

Shrimp boil, Sunday October 13th, from 3 til? To help raise funds for MCC's HELPLINE and newsletter. $3.00 cover, includes all the boiled shrimp you can eat, along with other goodies.

ESQUIRE - Rocky Horror Show November 1 and 2 at 9:30 p.m. Get your tickets from Esquire or any Osiris member. $5.00 per ticket.

PROFILE

Did you enjoy Mobile's Gay Pride 85? Our first profile is, Harry, organizer and leader of Pride 85. Harry was the catalyst that brought together the various elements of the community. It wasn't his first time out, certainly not his first effort for our benefit. Fifteen years in the Mobile area has seen Harry speaking at the University of South Alabama and Springhill College on Gay/Lesbian issues. He was one of the strong leaders of the old Gulf Alliance for Equality as well.

When Harry isn't working on our behalf, he enjoys meeting the public in his retail profession. While there's still daylight after a hard day at work, you might see him out bicycling or running, or on Sundays offering his talents at the Unitarian-Universalists' worship and fellowship. "My religion," Harry said, has given me a lot more direction in my life, and a greater sense of freedom to allow my own beliefs to evolve."

Harry offered the following thoughts about and reflections on Gay Pride'85: '85 was very successfull considering the late starting date for planning. '84, our first Gay Pride Activity, made '85 much easier to put together. Adding more organizations -- the UU's and MCC -- added much to '85's success. Without Danni B. '85 would not have come toether. A SPECIAL THANKS TO HER.

For 1986 Gay Pride, Harry foresees greatness. "For once, we are starting off with some money, $186.00, thanks to the bars. We will begin planning at a much earlier date, offering the same type of activities, with more variety, however. We will certainly push for more publicity and participation from all the organizations. We want Gay Pride to be financially self-supporting, and there's no reason it shouldn't be if we all work at it."

When asked what he would change if given the right opportunity, Harry offered the following: "I'd like to see more open Gay/Lesbian businesses, organizations, and individuals come out, and a greater media presence for the community. However, the fear of coming out is still our greatest obstacle. Most of us, including me, still face job discrimination, neighborhood harassment, and the possible loss of our families or their strong disapproval."

In a larger context, Harry went on, "Much of our recent publicity has been derogatory. I feel that the Moral Majority uses us as their biggest fundraiser, particularly now that AIDS has come to the forefront of the news media."

Harry is one of the strongest and most open figures in our Mobile Gay Community, and with his support and leadership, gay Mobile should reach the goals which he is helping us set.

SOCIETY LOUNGE - Beginning in October, the first weekend each month, Miss Betty will be presenting weekend shows at 10 and 12 midnight. No cover.

SOMETHING TO SELL, SERVICE TO OFFER?? Call 476-9142 for rates and deadlines. Please NO PERSONALS, except Birthday, Anniversary, Thank You's.

TROOPERS
215 Conti Street
438-9139
HOURS: 11 a.m.-3 a.m.

CORRAL
54 So. Conception
433-9258
Weekdays - Noon Till
Weekends - 24 hours

...from the pastor

SAUL AND ANOMIE

In the late 1800's, the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, coined the word ANOMIE (without a name) to explain the psychological state of strangers, people at the edge of social movements with enormous change, and people who belonged to subcultures where they were unsure of what the social expectations were within a dominant group. They felt, as James Baldwin must have, like "nobody knows my name." As a matter of fact, in a true state of anomie, it's more like "I don't even know my own name." Durkheim postulated that when a society is experiencing great anomie, the suicide rate goes up. When I read of Saul, the first king of Israel in the Bible, I realized that even in Biblical times, people knew the concept of anomie, even though they didn't know the word.

Saul lived in an anomic time. He was a soldier who had been trained in the old skills of warfare before iron was invented. Suddenly, there was iron. And iron was so strong that all the weapons he had been taught to use were nearly useless. So he learned to use iron, but he was never comfortable with it. Then the people of his area learned about a new God, and all the things he was used to in the old gods were outdated. To add to his problems, Jahweh decided Saul should be king of Israel. Saul wasn't from a royal family (there weren't any royal families in Israel -- he was the first) and he didn't know how a king behaved, he'd never even had a king. But Jahweh had selected him to be king. And still worse, his son gets friendly with this David fellow -- and he knows there's something strange there -- but can that fellow play the harp! He wasn't even permitted to ask the seer what was going to happen, and feel secure, he had to trust this Jahweh God. Saul learned to adapt -- but he was never happy with the new ways, and when things really got tough, he looked to his old gods and went over to see the Witch of Endor to find out what the enemy had in store. That was where he and Jahweh God parted. Poor Saul. He was caught in a world he hardly understood! Everything was changing, nothing seemed to have a center. How he wished for the good old days, when the gods were secure, the military knew what they were doing, the country had the right kind of folk leading it, and people knew how to behave-- knew the rules. Saul was so confused, he hardly knew his own name any more. He was a real case of anomie. And eventually, he did what Durkheim postulated -- he committed suicide.

Can you see some parallels? Many people today feel that sense of anomie. The world has changed so rapidly that people are frightened. They want some sense of the past to hold on to. God, they pray, make it safe again, let me know what to expect! Many Christians are at that point. The world has changed so greatly that they are frightened. Nuclear energy, great social upheaval -- especially within the time of the baby boomers; new forms of government--like Communism and socialism -- scare them. The questioning of old beliefs and the arising of new ideas --all of these together are frightening for people who remember how simple it was when everybody knew what to expect. When the milk train stopped and the old time religion had meaning for everyone -- when everyone was American and your neighbor wasn't a Cambodian Buddhist, a Russian Jew, a Japanese Taoist and your son or daughter hadn't picked up some new religion like the Moonies. When sexuality and sex roles were simple -- men were men and women were girls, and nobody they knew was gay. People out there are scared. And they want the old time religion that had meaning and they want to go back to the time when everybody knew the rules. Well, it's that kind of time, and Jerry Falwell plays upon the fears of those people, and promises them "The Old Time Gospel Hour" and tells them who the enemy is (us), and they follow him, and he profits, and profits, and profits.

But maybe there's more to it than that. Durkheim was also talking about anomie being a condition for strangers and sojourners and for people in subcultures. Maybe there's something there for us, as well. Gay liberation has called us to come out -- it has asked us to change our ways and to trust God to help us find a way to be a new kind of gay people-- strong, and open, and fearless. And

WELCOME

SOOM AND DIGNITY TO BEGIN IN MOBILE

Efforts are being made to organize two new organizations for gay and Lesbian people in Mobile. According to John P., who is spearheading the drive, the Silver Owls of Mobile (SOOM) and a Dignity chapter are looking for persons interested in these groups.

SOOM is a social group for older people, usually over the age of 40, and for younger people who like to be with older gays and Lesbians.

Dignity is an organization for gay Catholics and their friends. The chapter will be part of the national organization that consists of over 117 chapters across the nation.

"Too often gay and Lesbian Catholics feel alienated from their church. Dignity has been successful in being a bridge for these people to rebuild a religious life. Also, Dignity has been effective in creating a dialogue with the church's hierarchy," said John P.

He noted that the SOOM organization is simply an attempt to bring people together in a social context. "Many older gays and Lesbians simply have no social place to go except the bars, where they are usually ignored by younger people. SOOM will be an attempt to provide a congenial group for dinner parties, theater and other outings.

Anyone interested in SOOM or Dignity is asked to contact John at 342-7891, or the HELPLINE at 476-9142.

FIRST NIGHTERS

People interested in going to theater: Involves joining Joe Jefferson Players ($25.00 for 6 plays/musicals) plus other theater presentations. Call HELPLINE for further information - 476-9142.

Club Park Ave
#7 S. Joachim St.
Mobile, AL 36602
JIM CRISS
General Manager
(205) 433-1236
(205) 433-8185

...from the pastor

maybe we, too, are like the Falwell followers. It was so secure in my closet. I was so comfortable hiding. I really don't need these new, frightening ideas of openness and liberation, do I? Oh, yes, you do. You need them for your mental health, you need them for your ability to be a whole person, you need them in a world of change, so that you can change with the world and not be stuck, as Saul was, in fear. Saul clung to the old gods, and could not trust Jahweh God -- and he lost. Most of us try the same thing. We stick to our old gods, our closetedness and our lies. God sees through us -- God knows who we are, and God loves us enough to invite us to be KING. Be all you can be, be the royal person God invites you to be. The alternative for far too many of us has been Saul's solution, suicide; the death of who we really are or can be. The gay community is growing up, and learning that in taking risks there is strength and growth. Don't be a Saul -- be a David. Take the risks -- and grow!

COMING OUT

I've often heard Rev. Marge quote her friend from Providence, Ray LaRiviere, who coined a phrase about gay attitudes, "As long as I can boogie, I'm free." A lot of us started out the same way. If it hadn't been for Gay/Lesbian bars, we would have had nothing. Work, a relationship, maybe -- and then party time at the bars. But heavens, don't ask me to meet your there before the sun went down.

We remain in our closets, doing nothing, hoping and sometimes even praying that no one ever discovers who we "really are." From birth, almost, we are conditioned that to be Gay/Lesbian is a fate worse than death. So we hide and we die a thousand deaths each day. And then one day something wakes us up and we come face to face with years of playing "straight" games. The roles we adopted are unbelievable and staggering, not to mention the toll oppression has taken on our lives.

Sane or insane? The medical world finally realized our sexual preferences had nothing to do with our sanity. Yet, many of our people have difficulty making it through life. Many suffer dependency problems -- sexual, drug, alcohol -- many are emotionally crippled by "oppression sickness." They really don't remain sane in world that tries to crush them.

To many of you out there, "coming out" would be insane. For many it would be. The greatest day of my life, however, was when I became insane. Oh, I'd already come out to some very selected "straight" friends, having carefully tested the waters before ever diving. Heck, they already knew who I was anyway.

Things started changing the day I walked into the new MCC. Sweat poured down my back, fear gripped every part of my body. I made myself sit in the second pew from the front, another bold move for me. I looked behind me, and came face to face with an older "straight couple." I muttered some weird excuse (to whom I still don't know) and got up to leave. But I didn't.

I made it through the daylight. I made it through the service in God's house. I was introduced to the older couple and lived. Last week at Bruno's I happened to notice my attire and chuckled to myself. My MCC teeshirt looked quite nice! A couple of people gave me knowing smiles, but most of the shoppers paid no attention to me. Most of them, if they knew what an MCC was wouldn't have cared anyway. Most of your professional associates, your families, your straight friends probably know who you are right now. Some may not want the confrontation of being told, but many would welcome your openness and applaud your courage and honesty.

For years, a small minority ran my life. Now I'm in charge. IT FEELS GOOD!!!

THERE IS NO LONGER AN EXCUSE FOR SPREADING AIDS

Right now in the gay community, we're faced with some extremely difficult decisions because of AIDS -- sexual decisions affecting our lives and life-styles. We Gaymen have come up with a lot of excuses for avoiding the issue.

We all know that safer sex can reduce the risk of contracting and spreading AIDS. Some practices are more effective than others; some we have questions about.

We all need to make informed decisions, not excuses. You'll probably agree that none of the following excuses justify the pread of AIDS in our community:

"WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And it's the community's. Everyone must take a concerned and active role if we're going to stop the spread of this disease.

Here's another common excuse: "If someone doesn't ask me to practice safer sex, I figure that's his decision and I respect it."

Why? Aren't you concerned? Perhaps your partner is just as uncomfortable in raising the issue as you are.

"WHOSE LIFE IS IT, ANYWAY?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And the community's. The excuse, "It's my life," is only partly true. The life of your partner and the well-being of the community are also at stake.

AIDS is not just a physical problem. There are political, social, and economic effects as well. There is already evidence that social freedoms may be restricted because of AIDS. AIDS can be used as an excuse for anti-Gay action and legislation.

Making decisions about sexual practices is difficult. Sticking to those decisions is even more difficult. But this isn't a moral issue; it's a matter of life and death.

"CHANGING MY SEX LIFE ISN'T A CURE FOR AIDS."

That's true. There is no cure or vaccine. And researchers think they are years away from developing one. Safer sexual practices are our best means right now of reducing our risk and stopping the spread of AIDS.

"CHANGE? NOBODY ELSE IS DOING IT!"

The fact is that a major research project conducted by the AIDS Foundation among San Francisco Gaymen revealed that two-thirds of the Gay community is making a serious effort to reduce their risk by practicing safer sex. Two-thirds!

Talk about it. Even though its a difficult subject for everyone, chances are your partner is just as concerned as you are and would probably welcome a chance to discuss it.

Let's stop making excuses. Let's stop the spread of AIDS.

Reprinted from ACTS 29, Newsletter of [illegible]

Rectal gonorrhea has declined 86% since the AIDS scare -- people are aware of risks and are changing their sexual habits. Safe sex works.

Bulletin Board

HOOKER'S BALL - HALLOWEEN NIGHT -- Presented by all your favorite bars and the Order of Osiris. Prizes for costumes, all bars are involved, begins 7:00 p.m. Hallowe'en night, costumes are invited, and you are especially requested to attend this celebration of what is turning into the second most exciting activity of the year.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY - Queen Richard, Oct. 9, from all the folks at Esquire House.

Label JARS Not PEOPLE

ANNIVERSARY

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY - Oct. 5 to Chuck at Troopers on their 2nd Year of fun and support of the community.

HAPPY BELATED ANNIVERSARY TO CPA - We were not notified in time for publication last month, but CPA celebrated their 2nd anniversary on Sept. 27th. Great going, guys!

476-9142

Gay

Help-line

We met at

DAVID'S II

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985

from the fellowship

"FREE TO BE"

12TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF MCC

Sacramento, California. The conference got off to an exciting start. Rev. Elders Freda Smith and Nancy Wilson both preached Monday. I especially enjoyed hearing them. The film, "God, Gays, and the Gospel" was also shown for the first time on Monday.

The film, a documentary telling about MCC and what it means, cost about $100,000 to make. Many unique aspects of MCC were brought out. The fact that MCC has membrers from every religious background and the highest proportion of women ministers were particularly interesting.

In the business meetings, a great deal was accomplished in the first few days. The Government Structures and Systems proposal was accepted with some minor amendments. Two changes will have the most immediate impact. One is the adoption of the General Council as the governing body of MCC. The General Council will be composed of the Board of Directors and the District Coordinators, thus giving total regional representation at the highest MCC level. The other change is that there will be only commissioned and chartered churches (instead of the three tier system as previously: Study group, mission, chartered church.). At the conference I was an official observer, with a voice, but without vote. In the future, all delegates will have a vote. Each delegate will represent one hundred members or a portion of 100 if the church is smaller. This means that even the smallest church will have a voting delegate.

All of the elders standing for re-election were elected.

I had an opportunity to sing in the Conference Choir, and attended several workshops, including the Sexuality and Spirituality and Spiritual Gifts workshop.

R.P., Delegate

Check it Out

MCC is the largest Gay/Lesbian organization in the world.

NOW (Nat'l Organization for Women) offers insurance for "significant others" (not just physicians, but alternative medicine as well).

Jerry Falwell and his "Moral Majority" are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars across the country to stop Gay/Lesbian rights.

A local printer refused to print our first newsletter because of its content.

A local bank refused to open a joint bank account for a well-known Gay couple.

The Unitarian-Universalist Association openly supports Gay/Lesbian rights.

Mobile Mental Health has actively trained and offers continued support for the Gay Helpline volunteers.

The Gay Helpline is in operation every night from 6 p.m. to midnight for anyone needing someone to talk to -- check it out.

The local bar owners and managers -- Chuck, Miss Betty, Jim, John, Grace and David -- make the printing and mailing of this newsletter possible.

The bar owners and managers donated money and supplies for the kick-off party to celebrate the opening of the Helpline, and that we will be raising funds for the Helpline from time to time, due to their generosity.

October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
UU WORSHIP 10:30 AM ev. every Sunday	NOVEMBER 1st ROCKY HORROR SHOW AT ESQUIRE WITH OSTRIS	1	2 RAP; Who's on Top-- Power in Relationships.	3		ER'S ANNIVERSARY
6 MCC WORSHIP 7:00 P.M. 5:30 New Memb	7	8	9 RAP: Peer Pressure - Handling your friends.	10	11	12 COLUMBUS DAY
13 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 3:00Shrimp Boil at DAVID'sII UU VOLLEYBALL	14 COLUMBUS DAY OBSERVED	15	16 RAP Cross-Generational Relationships	17	18 UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS 2-DAY WORKSHOP	19 "The Haunting Church"
20 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 5:30 New Memb	21	22	23 RAP HOLDING HANDS Making a political statement.	24	25	26
27 MCC WORSHIP-7pm UU VOLLEYBALL 5:30 New Memb MOTHER-IN-LAW DAY	28	29	30 RAP HOMOPHOBIA -- THEIRS AND OURS	31 HOOKER'S BALL ALL THE BARS HALLOWEEN	SEPTEMBER	NOVEMBER

CLASSIFIED ADS

Weekend Sketch Group -- interested? Call the HELPLINE for information.

WRITERS GROUP -- Meet once a month for social contact and constructive criticism of members' work. Bring a piece of writing for criticism, and ke p a log of the number of hours spent writing. Contact Shirley L. at the HELPLINE.

BIKERS (no, silly, not that kind!) are being sought for a bike riding group. Ride, bring lunch and picnic-- weather will be perfect soon.

Halloween

FOR SALE: SCM Electric Typewriter, ribbon spool. Best offer. Evenings 8-10. 342-7891, ask for John.

PLUMBING - Indoors, reasonable rates. Expert service. Call evenings after 6, or Mondays, 476-5171, as for Harry.

CLEANING-INTERIOR PAINTING, WALLPAPER. Organize your precious collectibles?? Excellent references in both communities. 476-9142, ask for Shirley.

BOWLING LEAGUE -- Members of MCC want to form a bowling team to hopefully compete against other gay groups (bars, etc.). At least six teams are needed. Call the HELPLINE if you are interested.

SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.
433-9141

SUN. - THURS. 10 A. M. - 2 A.M.
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS

ESQUIRE
BAR & LOUNGE

- Phone 433-9175 -
Mon.-Fri. 9:30 a.m. Till
Sat. 9:30 a.m.-2a.m.
13 South Joachim St. Mobile, Ala.

The Metropolitan Community Church
AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD — MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA, Pastor — (205) 476-9142

Volume 1, No. 2 — October 1985

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART...

The veil of distaste and misconceptions surrounding the gay segment of the population is nowhere better illustrated than in the film, "God, Gays and the Gospel," a no-nonsense look at the rapid rise of the Metropolitan Community Church.

One of the most poignant plights of gay people in today's world is the denial of their right to worship by most of the traditional organized religions. Almost without exception the Christian faith has taken upon itself the right to refuse gays a part in the Family of God.

The long struggle by MCC founder Rev. Troy Perry to establish a faith, not just for gays but for anyone, is the focus of the film. In concise, to the point terms, the production addresses the sheer magnitude of the work being done and the forward strides being made by Perry and his legion of pastors and congregations.

Since its founding in 1969, MCC has endured everything from ridicule to bombings to burned-out church sanctuaries. More than 17 years later, Perry and his followers have forged a recognized, respected faith wherein all are welcomed. It is a tribute to the ecumenical and accepting nature of this church that 20 per cent of its members are non-gay. It is a true illustration of the overused, misused term, "real Christian people."

Perry, a transplanted Floridian, excluded from the church of his childhood, spent years berating himself as "unacceptable." In the end, he determined that there is no reason -- save for human bigotry and Biblical misinterpretation -- for gays to be denied a right to their faith. Nowhere in the Bible, he points out, is there condemnation of homosexuality as it is understood today. In one of his most moving sermons, he presents a stunning point: "If AIDS is God's "gift" to the homosexual, then is toxic shock syndrome God's "gift" to women for being female? ...or is Legionnaires' Disease God's "gift" to the American Legion for being too patriotic?

From the perspective of a "straight," the message of "God, Gays, and the Gospel" is very much to the point: No human deserves the right to tell another he or she will never be acceptable in the eyes of God. Moreover, it should be remembered that Perry et al are not working for immediate and total social acceptance, but for establishment of a climate of cooperation and understanding.

No "straight" who professes a concern for human rights should let gays bear this struggle alone.

(Note: N.J.Green is MCC at Mobile's "token straight," our assistant organist. Thank God for our "straight" friends.)

REMINDER

MCC MEMBERS-ATTENTION!
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NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

NEWS FROM THE LESBIAN TASK FORCE OF NOW

Two important pieces of legislation are going to be brought to Congress in this year, NOW has informed us. One, is H.R. 230, the Federal Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights Legislation which is spearheaded by Representative Ted Weiss of Brooklyn, N.Y. and carries the endorsement of 44 other representatives, including Rep. Gerry Studds of Massachusetts, an openly gay legislator. The bill primarily calls for the insertion of the words, "affexional or sexual orientation," throughout the Civil Rights Act of 1964, following the word "color," and in other legislation, like the Equal opportunity Act, where it is inserted after "sex." thus identifying gay and Lesbian discrimination as equal to that against people of color and as pervasive as sexism. Interestingly, the same act speaks against acts of intimidation or violence against gays and Lesbians in the same passage that it speaks about violence against religious groups.

The other piece of legislation is the now infamous McCarran-Walter act, which prohibits certain people from entering the United States because of political or sexual orientation. Farley Mowat, the Canadian author of such dangerous books as the environmental study, "Never Cry Wolf," and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Colombia's Nobel Prize Winning novelist, were both excluded -- and refused to be singled out as special cases -- under this Act. Gay men and women can be refused entry into the U.S. -- and have been -- by the terms of the McCarran Act. It is important for the McCarran Act to not include gays and Lesbians under the heading of those accused of "moral turpitude."

The legislation above is entitled Immigration Exclusion and Deportation Amendments of 1985. The first is HR 230. Your congressional representative will vote on both of these. Make your wishes known. One letter -- one letter -- can make the difference, because very few letters on any subject are received from constituents, and as many as five or six letters can seem like an avalanche. If you are interested in how to write to Congress, call the HELPLINE for a copy of MCC's booklet, Writing to Congress, from MCC's Department of Christian Social Action.

Bulletin Board

ORDER OF OSIRIS - "The Rocky Horror Show" Friday and Saturday, November 1 and 2, Presented by the Order of Osiris and the Esquire House -- at the Esquire House. $5.00 admission. See an Osiris member or your bartender for tickets.

Less than 140 days to Osiris' 5th Anniversary Mardi Gras Ball, February 7, 1986.

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - Study series for 4 weeks on Men's Life and Men's Issues. Call the UU's at 342-6834 for information and starting date (near the end of the month.)

2-day Workshop -- The Haunting Church October 18 and 19 at the UU Fellowship 6345 Old Shell Road.

Volleyball -- every 2nd and 4th Sunday, at 2 P.M. at the UU's, weather permitting.

better gay than grumpy

TROOPERS - Shuffleboard tournaments every Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. Pool tournaments every Thursday at 8:30. Some of the best popcorn in Mobile.

CORRAL - Pool tournament every Monday at 9:00 p.m. Please watch for announcements of upcoming Halloween events.

CPA - Costume contest at midnight in conjunction with Hooker's Ball.

Free buffet every Sunday at 9:30 p.m.

Watch for "Name that Tune" to begin early NOvember on Sunday evenings.

DAVID'S II - Special Guest, Halloween Eve through Saturday, Carmen Del Rio.

First Sunday of October begins David's free buffet from 3-9 p.m., and the Tea Dance.

Shrimp boil, Sunday October 13th, from 3 til? To help raise funds for MCC's HELPLINE and newsletter. $3.00 cover, includes all the boiled shrimp you can eat, along with other goodies.

ESQUIRE - Rocky Horror Show November 1 and 2 at 9:30 p.m. Get your tickets from Esquire or any Osiris member. $5.00 per ticket.

PROFILE

Did you enjoy Mobile's Gay Pride 85? Our first profile is, Harry, organizer and leader of Pride 85. Harry was the catalyst that brought together the various elements of the community. It wasn't his first time out, certainly not his first effort for our benefit. Fifteen years in the Mobile area has seen Harry speaking at the University of South Alabama and Springhill College on Gay/Lesbian issues. He was one of the strong leaders of the old Gulf Alliance for Equality as well.

When Harry isn't working on our behalf, he enjoys meeting the public in his retail profession. While there's still daylight after a hard day at work, you might see him out bicycling or running, or on Sundays offering his talents at the Unitarian-Universalists' worship and fellowship. "My religion," Harry said, has given me a lot more direction in my life, and a greater sense of freedom to allow my own beliefs to evolve."

Harry offered the following thoughts about and reflections on Gay Pride'85: '85 was very successfull considering the late starting date for planning. '84, our first Gay Pride Activity, made '85 much easier to put together. Adding more organizations -- the UU's and MCC -- added much to '85's success. Without Danni B. '85 would not have come toether. A SPECIAL THANKS TO HER.

For 1986 Gay Pride, Harry foresees greatness. "For once, we are starting off with some money, $186.00, thanks to the bars. We will begin planning at a much earlier date, offering the same type of activities, with more variety, however. We will certainly push for more publicity and participation from all the organizations. We want Gay Pride to be financially self-supporting, and there's no reason it shouldn't be if we all work at it."

When asked what he would change if given the right opportunity, Harry offered the following: "I'd like to see more open Gay/Lesbian businesses, organizations, and individuals come out, and a greater media presence for the community. However, the fear of coming out is still our greatest obstacle. Most of us, including me, still face job discrimination, neighborhood harassment, and the possible loss of our families or their strong disapproval."

In a larger context, Harry went on, "Much of our recent publicity has been derogatory. I feel that the Moral Majority uses us as their biggest fundraiser, particularly now that AIDS has come to the forefront of the news media."

Harry is one of the strongest and most open figures in our Mobile Gay Community, and with his support and leadership, gay Mobile should reach the goals which he is helping us set.

SOCIETY LOUNGE -- Beginning in October, the first weekend each month, Miss Betty will be presenting weekend shows at 10 and 12 midnight. No cover.

SOMETHING TO SELL, SERVICE TO OFFER?? Call 476-9142 for rates and deadlines. Please NO PERSONALS, except Birthday, Anniversary, Thank You's.

TROOPERS
215 Conti Street
438-9139
HOURS: 11 a.m.-3 a.m.

CORRAL
54 So. Conception
433-9258
Weekdays - Noon Till
Weekends - 24 hours

...from the pastor

SAUL AND ANOMIE

In the late 1800's, the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, coined the word ANOMIE (without a name) to explain the psychological state of strangers, people at the edge of social movements with enormous change, and people who belonged to subcultures where they were unsure of what the social expectations were within a dominant group. They felt, as James Baldwin must have, like "nobody knows my name." As a matter of fact, in a true state of anomie, it's more like "I don't even know my own name." Durkheim postulated that when a society is experiencing great anomie, the suicide rate goes up. When I read of Saul, the first king of Israel in the Bible, I realized that even in Biblical times, people knew the concept of anomie, even though they didn't know the word.

Saul lived in an anomic time. He was a soldier who had been trained in the old skills of warfare before iron was invented. Suddenly, there was iron. And iron was so strong that all the weapons he had been taught to use were nearly useless. So he learned to use iron, but he was never comfortable with it. Then the people of his area learned about a new God, and all the things he was used to in the old gods were outdated. To add to his problems, Jahweh decided Saul should be king of Israel. Saul wasn't from a royal family (there weren't any royal families in Israel -- he was the first) and he didn't know how a king behaved, he'd never even had a king. But Jahweh had selected him to be king. And still worse, his son gets friendly with this David fellow -- and he knows there's something strange there -- but can that fellow play the harp! He wasn't even permitted to ask the seer what was going to happen, and feel secure, he had to trust this Jahweh God. Saul learned to adapt -- but he was never happy with the new ways, and when things really got tough, he looked to his old gods and went over to see the Witch of Endor to find out what the enemy had in store. That was where he and Jahweh God parted. Poor Saul. He was caught in a world he hardly understood! Everything was changing, nothing seemed to have a center. How he wished for the good old days, when the gods were secure, the military knew what they were doing, the country had the right kind of folk leading it, and people knew how to behave-- knew the rules. Saul was so confused, he hardly knew his own name any more. He was a real case of anomie. And eventually, he did what Durkheim postulated -- he committed suicide.

Can you see some parallels? Many people today feel that sense of anomie. The world has changed so rapidly that people are frightened. They want some sense of the past to hold on to. God, they pray, make it safe again, let me know what to expect! Many Christians are at that point. The world has changed so greatly that they are frightened. Nuclear energy, great social upheaval -- especially within the time of the baby boomers; new forms of government--like Communism and socialism -- scare them. The questioning of old beliefs and the arising of new ideas --all of these together are frightening for people who remember how simple it was when everybody knew what to expect. When the milk train stopped and the old time religion had meaning for everyone -- when everyone was American and your neighbor wasn't a Cambodian Buddhist, a Russian Jew, a Japanese Taoist and your son or daughter hadn't picked up some new religion like the Moonies. When sexuality and sex roles were simple -- men were men and women were girls, and nobody they knew was gay. People out there are scared. And they want the old time religion that had meaning and they want to go back to the time when everybody knew the rules. Well, it's that kind of time, and Jerry Falwell plays upon the fears of those people, and promises them "The Old Time Gospel Hour" and tells them who the enemy is (us), and they follow him, and he profits, and profits, and profits.

But maybe there's more to it than that. Durkheim was also talking about anomie being a condition for strangers and sojourners and for people in subcultures. Maybe there's something there for us, as well. Gay liberation has called us to come out -- it has asked us to change our ways and to trust God to help us find a way to be a new kind of gay people-- strong, and open, and fearless. And

WELCOME

SOOM AND DIGNITY TO BEGIN IN MOBILE

Efforts are being made to organize two new organizations for gay and Lesbian people in Mobile. According to John P., who is spearheading the drive, the Silver Owls of Mobile (SOOM) and a Dignity chapter are looking for persons interested in these groups.

SOOM is a social group for older people, usually over the age of 40, and for younger people who like to be with older gays and Lesbians.

Dignity is an organization for gay Catholics and their friends. The chapter will be part of the national organization that consists of over 117 chapters across the nation.

"Too often gay and Lesbian Catholics feel alienated from their church. Dignity has been successful in being a bridge for these people to rebuild a religious life. Also, Dignity has been effective in creating a dialogue with the church's hierarchy," said John P.

He noted that the SOOM organization is simply an attempt to bring people together in a social context. "Many older gays and Lesbians simply have no social place to go except the bars, where they are usually ignored by younger people. SOOM will be an attempt to provide a congenial group for dinner parties, theater and other outings.

Anyone interested in SOOM or Dignity is asked to contact John at 342-7891, or the HELPLINE at 476-9142.

FIRST NIGHTERS

People interested in going to theater: Involves joining Joe Jefferson Players ($25.00 for 6 plays/musicals) plus other theater presentations. Call HELPLINE for further information - 476-9142.

Club Park Ave
#7 S. Joachim St.
Mobile, AL 36602
(205) 433-1236
(205) 433-9105
JIM CRISS
General Manager

...from the pastor

maybe we, too, are like the Falwell followers. It was so secure in my closet. I was so comfortable hiding. I really don't need these new, frightening ideas of openness and liberation, do I? Oh, yes, you do. You need them for your mental health, you need them for your ability to be a whole person, you need them in a world of change, so that you can change with the world and not be stuck, as Saul was, in fear. Saul clung to the old gods, and could not trust Jahweh God -- and he lost. Most of us try the same thing. We stick to our old gods, our closetedness and our lies. God sees through us -- God knows who we are, and God loves us enough to invite us to be KING. Be all you can be, be the royal person God invites you to be. The alternative for far too many of us has been Saul's solution, suicide; the death of who we really are or can be. The gay community is growing up, and learning that in taking risks there is strength and growth. Don't be a Saul -- be a David. Take the risks -- and grow!

COMING OUT

I've often heard Rev. Marge quote her friend from Providence, Ray LaRiviere, who coined a phrase about gay attitudes, "As long as I can boogie, I'm free." A lot of us started out the same way. If it hadn't been for Gay/Lesbian bars, we would have had nothing. Work, a relationship, maybe -- and then party time at the bars. But heavens, don't ask me to meet your there before the sun went down.

We remain in our closets, doing nothing, hoping and sometimes even praying that no one ever discovers who we "really are." From birth, almost, we are conditioned that to be Gay/Lesbian is a fate worse than death. So we hide and we die a thousand deaths each day. And then one day something wakes us up and we come face to face with years of playing "straight" games. The roles we adopted are unbelievable and staggering, not to mention the toll oppression has taken on our lives.

Sane or insane? The medical world finally realized our sexual preferences had nothing to do with our sanity. Yet, many of our people have difficulty making it through life. Many suffer dependency problems -- sexual, drug, alcohol -- many are emotionally crippled by "oppression sickness." They really don't remain sane in world that tries to crush them.

To many of you out there, "coming out" would be insane. For many it would be. The greatest day of my life, however, was when I became insane. Oh, I'd already come out to some very selected "straight" friends, having carefully tested the waters before ever diving. Heck, they already knew who I was anyway.

Things started changing the day I walked into the new MCC. Sweat poured down my back, fear gripped every part of my body. I made myself sit in the second pew from the front, another bold move for me. I looked behind me, and came face to face with an older "straight couple." I muttered some weird excuse (to whom I still don't know) and got up to leave. But I didn't.

I made it through the daylight. I made it through the service in God's house. I was introduced to the older couple and lived. Last week at Bruno's I happened to notice my attire and chuckled to myself. My MCC teeshirt looked quite nice! A couple of people gave me knowing smiles, but most of the shoppers paid no attention to me. Most of them, if they knew what an MCC was wouldn't have cared anyway. Most of your professional associates, your families, your straight friends probably know who you are right now. Some may not want the confrontation of being told, but many would welcome your openness and applaud your courage and honesty.

For years, a small minority ran my life. Now I'm in charge. IT FEELS GOOD!!!

THERE IS NO LONGER AN EXCUSE FOR SPREADING AIDS

Right now in the gay community, we're faced with some extremely difficult decisions because of AIDS -- sexual decisions affecting our lives and life-styles. We Gaymen have come up with a lot of excuses for avoiding the issue.

We all know that safer sex can reduce the risk of contracting and spreading AIDS. Some practices are more effective than others; some we have questions about.

We all need to make informed decisions, not excuses. You'll probably agree that none of the following excuses justify the pread of AIDS in our community:

"WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And it's the community's. Everyone must take a concerned and active role if we're going to stop the spread of this disease.

Here's another common excuse: "If someone doesn't ask me to practice safer sex, I figure that's his decision and I respect it."

Why? Aren't you concerned? Perhaps your partner is just as uncomfortable in raising the issue as you are.

"WHOSE LIFE IS IT, ANYWAY?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And the community's. The excuse, "It's my life," is only partly true. The life of your partner and the well-being of the community are also at stake.

AIDS is not just a physical problem. There are political, social, and economic effects as well. There is already evidence that social freedoms may be restricted because of AIDS. AIDS can be used as an excuse for anti-Gay action and legislation.

Making decisions about sexual practices is difficult. Sticking to those decisions is even more difficult. But this isn't a moral issue; it's a matter of life and death.

"CHANGING MY SEX LIFE ISN"T A CURE FOR AIDS."

That's true. There is no cure or vaccine. And researchers think they are years away from developing one. Safer sexual practices are our best means right now of reducing our risk and stopping the spread of AIDS.

"CHANGE? NOBODY ELSE IS DOING IT!"

The fact is that a major research project conducted by the AIDS Foundation among San Francisco Gaymen revealed that two-thirds of the Gay community is making a serious effort to reduce their risk by practicing safer sex. Two-thirds!

Talk about it. Even though its a difficult subject for everyone, chances are your partner is just as concerned as you are and would probably welcome a chance to discuss it.

Let's stop making excuses. Let's stop the spread of AIDS.

Reprinted from ACTS 29, Newsletter of [illegible]

Rectal gonorrhea has declined 86% since the AIDS scare -- people are aware of risks and are changing their sexual habits. Safe sex works.

Bulletin Board

HOOKER'S BALL - HALLOWEEN NIGHT -- Presented by all your favorite bars and the Order of Osiris. Prizes for costumes, all bars are involved, begins 7:00 p.m. Hallowe'en night, costumes are invited, and you are especially requested to attend this celebration of what is turning into the second most exciting activity of the year.

Birthdays

HAPPY BIRTHDAY - Queen Richard, Oct.9, from all the folks at Esquire House.

Label JARS Not PEOPLE

ANNIVERSARY

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY - Oct. 5 to Chuck at Troopers on their 2nd Year of fun and support of the community.

HAPPY BELATED ANNIVERSARY TO CPA - We were not notified in time for publication last month, but CPA celebrated their 2nd anniversary on Sept. 27th. Great going, guys!

476-9142

Gay

Help-line

We met at

DAVID'S II

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985

from the fellowship

"FREE TO BE"

12TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF MCC

Sacramento, California. The conference got off to an exciting start. Rev. Elders Freda Smith and Nancy Wilson both preached Monday. I especially enjoyed hearing them. The film, "God, Gays, and the Gospel" was also shown for the first time on Monday.

The film, a documentary telling about MCC and what it means, cost about $100,000 to make. Many unique aspects of MCC were brought out. The fact that MCC has membrers from every religious background and the highest proportion of women ministers were particularly interesting.

In the business meetings, a great deal was accomplished in the first few days. The Government Structures and Systems proposal was accepted with some minor amendments. Two changes will have the most immediate impact. One is the adoption of the General Council as the governing body of MCC. The General Council will be composed of the Board of Directors and the District Coordinators, thus giving total regional representation at the highest MCC level. The other change is that there will be only commissioned and chartered churches (instead of the three tier system as previously: Study group, mission, chartered church.). At the conference I was an official observer, with a voice, but without vote. In the future, all delegates will have a vote. Each delegate will represent one hundred members or a portion of 100 if the church is smaller. This means that even the smallest church will have a voting delegate.

All of the elders standing for re-election were elected.

I had an opportunity to sing in the Conference Choir, and attended several workshops, including the Sexuality and Spirituality and Spiritual Gifts workshop.

R.P., Delegate

Check it Out

MCC is the largest Gay/Lesbian organization in the world.

NOW (Nat'l Organization for Women) offers insurance for "significant others" (not just physicians, but alternative medicine as well).

Jerry Falwell and his "Moral Majority" are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars across the country to stop Gay/Lesbian rights.

A local printer refused to print our first newsletter because of its content.

A local bank refused to open a joint bank account for a well-known Gay couple.

The Unitarian-Universalist Association openly supports Gay/Lesbian rights.

Mobile Mental Health has actively trained and offers continued support for the Gay Helpline volunteers.

The Gay Helpline is in operation every night from 6 p.m. to midnight for anyone needing someone to talk to -- check it out.

The local bar owners and managers -- Chuck, Miss Betty, Jim, John, Grace and David -- make the printing and mailing of this newsletter possible.

The bar owners and managers donated money and supplies for the kick-off party to celebrate the opening of the Helpline, and that we will be raising funds for the Helpline from time to time, due to their generosity.

The Metropolitan Community Church
AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD — MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA
Pastor

(205) 476-9142

Volume 1, No. 2 — October 1985

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One of the most poignant plights of gay people in today's world is the denial of their right to worship by most of the traditional organized religions. Almost without exception the Christian faith has taken upon itself the right to refuse gays a part in the Family of God.

The long struggle by MCC founder Rev. Troy Perry to establish a faith, not just for gays but for anyone, is the focus of the film. In concise, to the point terms, the production addresses the sheer magnitude of the work being done and the forward strides being made by Perry and his legion of pastors and congregations.

Since its founding in 1969, MCC has endured everything from ridicule to bombings to burned-out church sanctuaries. More than 17 years later, Perry and his followers have forged a recognized, respected faith wherein all are welcomed. It is a tribute to the ecumenical and accepting nature of this church that 20 per cent of its members are non-gay. It is a true illustration of the overused, misused term, "real Christian people."

Perry, a transplanted Floridian, excluded from the church of his childhood, spent years berating himself as "unacceptable." In the end, he determined that there is no reason -- save for human bigotry and Biblical misinterpretation -- for gays to be denied a right to their faith. Nowhere in the Bible, he points out, is there condemnation of homosexuality as it is understood today. In one of his most moving sermons, he presents a stunning point: "If AIDS is God's "gift" to the homosexual, then is toxic shock syndrome God's "gift" to women for being female? ...or is Legionnaires' Disease God's "gift" to the American Legion for being too patriotic?

From the perspective of a "straight," the message of "God, Gays, and the Gospel" is very much to the point: No human deserves the right to tell another he or she will never be acceptable in the eyes of God. Moreover, it should be remembered that Perry et al are not working for immediate and total social acceptance, but for establishment of a climate of cooperation and understanding.

No "straight" who professes a concern for human rights should let gays bear this struggle alone.

(Note: N.J.Green is MCC at Mobile's "token straight," our assistant organist. Thank God for our "straight" friends.)

REMINDER

MCC MEMBERS-ATTENTION!
Congregational Meeting, October 27, following worship service. Election of officers, other important business, including coming into agreement with GSS changes.

October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
MCC WORSHIP 10:30 AM ev. every Sunday	NOVEMBER 1st ROCKY HORROR SHOW AT ESQUIRE WITH OSTRIS	1	2 RAP; What's on Top-- Power in Relationships.	3		FR'S ANNIVERSARY
6 MCC WORSHIP 7:00 P.M. 5:30 New Memb	7	8	9 RAP: Peer Pressure - Handling your friends.	10	11	12 COLUMBUS DAY
13 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 3:00 Shrimp Boil at DAVID'sII VOLLEYBALL	14 COLUMBUS DAY OBSERVED	15	16 RAP Cross-Generational Relationships	17	18 UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS 2-DAY WORKSHOP "The Haunting Church"	19
20 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 5:30 New Memb	21	22	23 RAP HOLDING HANDS Making a political statement.	24	25	26
27 MCC WORSHIP-7pm UU VOLLEYBALL 5:30 New Memb MOTHER-IN-LAW DAY	28	29	30 RAP HOMOPHOBIA -- THEIRS AND OURS	31 HOOKER'S BALL ALL THE BARS HALLOWEEN	SEPTEMBER	NOVEMBER

CLASSIFIED ADS

Weekend Sketch Group -- interested? Call the HELPLINE for information.

WRITERS GROUP -- Meet once a month for social contact and constructive criticism of members' work. Bring a piece of writing for criticism, and ke p a log of the number of hours spent wri ting. Contact Shirley L. at the HELPLINE.

BIKERS (no, silly, not that kind!) are being sought for a bike riding group. Ride, bring lunch and picnic-- weather will be perfect soon.

Halloween

FOR SALE: SCM Electric Typewriter, ribbon spool. Best offer. Evenings 8-10. 342-7891, ask for John.

PLUMBING - Indoors, reasonable rates. Expert service. Call evenings after 6, or Mondays, 476-5171, as for Harry.

CLEANING-INTERIOR PAINTING, WALLPAPER. Organize your precious collectibles?? Excellent references in both communities. 476-9142, ask for Shirley.

BOWLING LEAGUE -- Members of MCC want to form a bowling team to hopefully compete against other gay groups (bars, etc.). At least six teams are needed. Call the HELPLINE if you are interested.

SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.
433-9141

SUN. - THURS. 10 A. M. - 2 A.M.
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS

ESQUIRE
BAR & LOUNGE

- Phone 433-9175 -
Mon.-Fri. 9:30 a.m. Till
Sat. 9:30 a.m.-2a.m.
13 South Joachim St. Mobile, Ala.

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FROM THE EDITOR--

Our first issue was a roaring success, so the community tells us. We personally wish to thank the bar owners and managers for making the newsletter a reality, rather than the "dream" so many of us have talked about for the last couple of years. At last we have a way to communicate ideas among gays in Mobile. We also want to apologize to Chuck at Troopers for omitting a news item last month. Thanks for bearing with us and our mistakes -- we'll get it right with practice. A word of thanks to all of you out there from the small group at MCC. Because of you the newsletter will continue to grow, to increase our awareness and to solidify the community.

To date we have received the names "Revelations," "Mobile Pride News," and "Genesis." Don't be bashful. Send or call in your suggestion.

We stated our purpose last month, "to offer a news source for the entire community." We are happy to report that this issue, our second, has accomplished that goal. Sincere applause to each organization and business for your participation. We are open to your suggestions and your criticism. Our new feature, "Community Profile" has already been designated for the November issue. Send in the name of someone you wish to acknowledge in a future issue.

Our editorial policy requires that a name and address be submitted along with newscopy. Your name and address will not be printed without your written consent, but we must have this information to protect the legal position of the church. Please drop editorial copy or editorial replies at the church or mail them to: MCC Newsletter, P.O. Box 8524, Mobile, Ala. 36608. The deadline for all copy is the Third Monday of the Month.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

NEWS FROM THE LESBIAN TASK FORCE OF NOW

Two important pieces of legislation are going to be brought to Congress in this year, NOW has informed us. One, is H.R. 230, the Federal Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights Legislation which is spearheaded by Representative Ted Weiss of Brooklyn, N.Y. and carries the endorsement of 44 other representatives, including Rep. Gerry Studds of Massachusetts, an openly gay legislator. The bill primarily calls for the insertion of the words, "affexional or sexual orientation," throughout the Civil Rights Act of 1964, following the word "color," and in other legislation, like the Equal opportunity Act, where it is inserted after "sex." thus identifying gay and Lesbian discrimination as equal to that against people of color and as pervasive as sexism. Interestingly, the same act speaks against acts of intimidation or violence against gays and Lesbians in the same passage that it speaks about violence against religious groups.

The other piece of legislation is the now infamous McCarran-Walter act, which prohibits certain people from entering the United States because of political or sexual orientation. Farley Mowat, the Canadian author of such dangerous books as the environmental study, "Never Cry Wolf," and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Colombia's Nobel Prize Winning novelist, were both excluded -- and refused to be singled out as special cases -- under this Act. Gay men and women can be refused entry into the U.S. -- and have been -- by the terms of the McCarran Act. It is important for the McCarran Act to not include gays and Lesbians under the heading of those accused of "moral turpitude."

The legislation above is entitled Immigration Exclusion and Deportation Amendments of 1985. The first is HR 230. Your congressional representative will vote on both of these. Make your wishes known. One letter -- one letter -- can make the difference, because very few letters on any subject are received from constituents, and as many as five or six letters can seem like an avalanche. If you are interested in how to write to Congress, call the HELPLINE for a copy of MCC's booklet, Writing to Congress, from MCC's Department of Christian Social Action.

Bulletin Board

ORDER OF OSIRIS - "The Rocky Horror Show" Friday and Saturday, November 1 and 2, Presented by the Order of Osiris and the Esquire House -- at the Esquire House. $5.00 admission. See an Osiris member or your bartender for tickets.

Less than 140 days to Osiris' 5th Anniversary Mardi Gras Ball, February 7, 1986.

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - Study series for 4 weeks on Men's Life and Men's Issues. Call the UU's at 342-6834 for information and starting date (near the end of the month.)

2-day Workshop -- The Haunting Church October 18 and 19 at the UU Fellowship 6345 Old Shell Road.

Volleyball -- every 2nd and 4th Sunday, at 2 P.M. at the UU's, weather permitting.

better gay than grumpy

TROOPERS - Shuffleboard tournaments every Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. Pool tournaments every Thursday at 8:30. Some of the best popcorn in Mobile.

CORRAL - Pool tournament every Monday at 9:00 p.m. Please watch for announcements of upcoming Halloween events.

CPA - Costume contest at midnight in conjunction with Hooker's Ball.

Free buffet every Sunday at 9:30 p.m.

Watch for "Name that Tune" to begin early NOvember on Sunday evenings.

DAVID'S II - Special Guest, Halloween Eve through Saturday, Carmen Del Rio.

First Sunday of October begins David's free buffet from 3-9 p.m., and the Tea Dance.

Shrimp boil, Sunday October 13th, from 3 til? To help raise funds for MCC's HELPLINE and newsletter. $3.00 cover, includes all the boiled shrimp you can eat, along with other goodies.

ESQUIRE - Rocky Horror Show November 1 and 2 at 9:30 p.m. Get your tickets from Esquire or any Osiris member. $5.00 per ticket.

PROFILE

Did you enjoy Mobile's Gay Pride 85? Our first profile is, Harry, organizer and leader of Pride 85. Harry was the catalyst that brought together the various elements of the community. It wasn't his first time out, certainly not his first effort for our benefit. Fifteen years in the Mobile area has seen Harry speaking at the University of South Alabama and Springhill College on Gay/Lesbian issues. He was one of the strong leaders of the old Gulf Alliance for Equality as well.

When Harry isn't working on our behalf, he enjoys meeting the public in his retail profession. While there's still daylight after a hard day at work, you might see him out bicycling or running, or on Sundays offering his talents at the Unitarian-Universalists' worship and fellowship. "My religion," Harry said, has given me a lot more direction in my life, and a greater sense of freedom to allow my own beliefs to evolve."

Harry offered the following thoughts about and reflections on Gay Pride'85: '85 was very successfull considering the late starting date for planning. '84, our first Gay Pride Activity, made '85 much easier to put together. Adding more organizations -- the UU's and MCC -- added much to '85's success. Without Danni B. '85 would not have come toether. A SPECIAL THANKS TO HER.

For 1986 Gay Pride, Harry foresees greatness. "For once, we are starting off with some money, $186.00, thanks to the bars. We will begin planning at a much earlier date, offering the same type of activities, with more variety, however. We will certainly push for more publicity and participation from all the organizations. We want Gay Pride to be financially self-supporting, and there's no reason it shouldn't be if we all work at it."

When asked what he would change if given the right opportunity, Harry offered the following: "I'd like to see more open Gay/Lesbian businesses, organizations, and individuals come out, and a greater media presence for the community. However, the fear of coming out is still our greatest obstacle. Most of us, including me, still face job discrimination, neighborhood harassment, and the possible loss of our families or their strong disapproval."

In a larger context, Harry went on, "Much of our recent publicity has been derogatory. I feel that the Moral Majority uses us as their biggest fundraiser, particularly now that AIDS has come to the forefront of the news media."

Harry is one of the strongest and most open figures in our Mobile Gay Community, and with his support and leadership, gay Mobile should reach the goals which he is helping us set.

SOCIETY LOUNGE - Beginning in October, the first weekend each month, Miss Betty will be presenting weekend shows at 10 and 12 midnight. No cover.

SOMETHING TO SELL, SERVICE TO OFFER?? Call 476-9142 for rates and deadlines. Please NO PERSONALS, except Birthday, Anniversary, Thank You's.

TROOPERS
215 Conti Street
438-9139
HOURS: 11 a.m.-3 a.m.

CORRAL
54 So. Conception
433-9258
Weekdays - Noon Till
Weekends - 24 hours

...from the pastor

SAUL AND ANOMIE

In the late 1800's, the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, coined the word ANOMIE (without a name) to explain the psychological state of strangers, people at the edge of social movements with enormous change, and people who belonged to subcultures where they were unsure of what the social expectations were within a dominant group. They felt, as James Baldwin must have, like "nobody knows my name." As a matter of fact, in a true state of anomie, it's more like "I don't even know my own name." Durkheim postulated that when a society is experiencing great anomie, the suicide rate goes up. When I read of Saul, the first king of Israel in the Bible, I realized that even in Biblical times, people knew the concept of anomie, even though they didn't know the word.

Saul lived in an anomic time. He was a soldier who had been trained in the old skills of warfare before iron was invented. Suddenly, there was iron. And iron was so strong that all the weapons he had been taught to use were nearly useless. So he learned to use iron, but he was never comfortable with it. Then the people of his area learned about a new God, and all the things he was used to in the old gods were outdated. To add to his problems, Jahweh decided Saul should be king of Israel. Saul wasn't from a royal family (there weren't any royal families in Israel -- he was the first) and he didn't know how a king behaved, he'd never even had a king. But Jahweh had selected him to be king. And still worse, his son gets friendly with this David fellow -- and he knows there's something strange there -- but can that fellow play the harp! He wasn't even permitted to ask the seer what was going to happen, and feel secure, he had to trust this Jahweh God. Saul learned to adapt -- but he was never happy with the new ways, and when things really got tough, he looked to his old gods and went over to see the Witch of Endor to find out what the enemy had in store. That was where he and Jahweh God parted. Poor Saul. He was caught in a world he hardly understood! Everything was changing, nothing seemed to have a center. How he wished for the good old days, when the gods were secure, the military knew what they were doing, the country had the right kind of folk leading it, and people knew how to behave-- knew the rules. Saul was so confused, he hardly knew his own name any more. He was a real case of anomie. And eventually, he did what Durkheim postulated -- he committed suicide.

Can you see some parallels? Many people today feel that sense of anomie. The world has changed so rapidly that people are frightened. They want some sense of the past to hold on to. God, they pray, make it safe again, let me know what to expect! Many Christians are at that point. The world has changed so greatly that they are frightened. Nuclear energy, great social upheaval -- especially within the time of the baby boomers; new forms of government--like Communism and socialism -- scare them. The questioning of old beliefs and the arising of new ideas --all of these together are frightening for people who remember how simple it was when everybody knew what to expect. When the milk train stopped and the old time religion had meaning for everyone -- when everyone was American and your neighbor wasn't a Cambodian Buddhist, a Russian Jew, a Japanese Taoist and your son or daughter hadn't picked up some new religion like the Moonies. When sexuality and sex roles were simple -- men were men and women were girls, and nobody they knew was gay. People out there are scared. And they want the old time religion that had meaning and they want to go back to the time when everybody knew the rules. Well, it's that kind of time, and Jerry Falwell plays upon the fears of those people, and promises them "The Old Time Gospel Hour" and tells them who the enemy is (us), and they follow him, and he profits, and profits, and profits.

But maybe there's more to it than that. Durkheim was also talking about anomie being a condition for strangers and sojourners and for people in subcultures. Maybe there's something there for us, as well. Gay liberation has called us to come out -- it has asked us to change our ways and to trust God to help us find a way to be a new kind of gay people-- strong, and open, and fearless. And

SOOM AND DIGNITY TO BEGIN IN MOBILE

Efforts are being made to organize two new organizations for gay and Lesbian people in Mobile. According to John P., who is spearheading the drive, the Silver Owls of Mobile (SOOM) and a Dignity chapter are looking for persons interested in these groups.

SOOM is a social group for older people, usually over the age of 40, and for younger people who like to be with older gays and Lesbians.

Dignity is an organization for gay Catholics and their friends. The chapter will be part of the national organization that consists of over 117 chapters across the nation.

"Too often gay and Lesbian Catholics feel alienated from their church. Dignity has been successful in being a bridge for these people to rebuild a religious life. Also, Dignity has been effective in creating a dialogue with the church's hierarchy," said John P.

He noted that the SOOM organization is simply an attempt to bring people together in a social context. "Many older gays and Lesbians simply have no social place to go except the bars, where they are usually ignored by younger people. SOOM will be an attempt to provide a congenial group for dinner parties, theater and other outings.

Anyone interested in SOOM or Dignity is asked to contact John at 342-7891, or the HELPLINE at 476-9142.

FIRST NIGHTERS

People interested in going to theater: Involves joining Joe Jefferson Players ($25.00 for 6 plays/musicals) plus other theater presentations. Call HELPLINE for further information - 476-9142.

Club Park Ave
#7 S. Joachim St.
Mobile, AL 36602
(205) 433-1236
(205) 433-9185
JIM CRISS
General Manager

...from the pastor

maybe we, too, are like the Falwell followers. It was so secure in my closet. I was so comfortable hiding. I really don't need these new, frightening ideas of openness and liberation, do I? Oh, yes, you do. You need them for your mental health, you need them for your ability to be a whole person, you need them in a world of change, so that you can change with the world and not be stuck, as Saul was, in fear. Saul clung to the old gods, and could not trust Jahweh God -- and he lost. Most of us try the same thing. We stick to our old gods, our closetedness and our lies. God sees through us -- God knows who we are, and God loves us enough to invite us to be KING. Be all you can be, be the royal person God invites you to be. The alternative for far too many of us has been Saul's solution, suicide; the death of who we really are or can be. The gay community is growing up, and learning that in taking risks there is strength and growth. Don't be a Saul -- be a David. Take the risks -- and grow!

COMING OUT

I've often heard Rev. Marge quote her friend from Providence, Ray LaRiviere, who coined a phrase about gay attitudes, "As long as I can boogie, I'm free." A lot of us started out the same way. If it hadn't been for Gay/Lesbian bars, we would have had nothing. Work, a relationship, maybe -- and then party time at the bars. But heavens, don't ask me to meet your there before the sun went down.

We remain in our closets, doing nothing, hoping and sometimes even praying that no one ever discovers who we "really are." From birth, almost, we are conditioned that to be Gay/Lesbian is a fate worse than death. So we hide and we die a thousand deaths each day. And then one day something wakes us up and we come face to face with years of playing "straight" games. The roles we adopted are unbelievable and staggering, not to mention the toll oppression has taken on our lives.

Sane or insane? The medical world finally realized our sexual preferences had nothing to do with our sanity. Yet, many of our people have difficulty making it through life. Many suffer dependency problems -- sexual, drug, alcohol -- many are emotionally crippled by "oppression sickness." They really don't remain sane in world that tries to crush them.

To many of you out there, "coming out" would be insane. For many it would be. The greatest day of my life, however, was when I became insane. Oh, I'd already come out to some very selected "straight" friends, having carefully tested the waters before ever diving. Heck, they already knew who I was anyway.

Things started changing the day I walked into the new MCC. Sweat poured down my back, fear gripped every part of my body. I made myself sit in the second pew from the front, another bold move for me. I looked behind me, and came face to face with an older "straight couple." I muttered some weird excuse (to whom I still don't know) and got up to leave. But I didn't.

I made it through the daylight. I made it through the service in God's house. I was introduced to the older couple and lived. Last week at Bruno's I happened to notice my attire and chuckled to myself. My MCC teeshirt looked quite nice! A couple of people gave me knowing smiles, but most of the shoppers paid no attention to me. Most of them, if they knew what an MCC was wouldn't have cared anyway. Most of your professional associates, your families, your straight friends probably know who you are right now. Some may not want the confrontation of being told, but many would welcome your openness and applaud your courage and honesty.

For years, a small minority ran my life. Now I'm in charge. IT FEELS GOOD!!!

THERE IS NO LONGER AN EXCUSE FOR SPREADING AIDS

Right now in the gay community, we're faced with some extremely difficult decisions because of AIDS -- sexual decisions affecting our lives and life-styles. We Gaymen have come up with a lot of excuses for avoiding the issue.

We all know that safer sex can reduce the risk of contracting and spreading AIDS. Some practices are more effective than others; some we have questions about.

We all need to make informed decisions, not excuses. You'll probably agree that none of the following excuses justify the pread of AIDS in our community:

"WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And it's the community's. Everyone must take a concerned and active role if we're going to stop the spread of this disease.

Here's another common excuse: "If someone doesn't ask me to practice safer sex, I figure that's his decision and I respect it."

Why? Aren't you concerned? Perhaps your partner is just as uncomfortable in raising the issue as you are.

"WHOSE LIFE IS IT, ANYWAY?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And the community's. The excuse, "It's my life," is only partly true. The life of your partner and the well-being of the community are also at stake.

AIDS is not just a physical problem. There are political, social, and economic effects as well. There is already evidence that social freedoms may be restricted because of AIDS. AIDS can be used as an excuse for anti-Gay action and legislation.

Making decisions about sexual practices is difficult. Sticking to those decisions is even more difficult. But this isn't a moral issue; it's a matter of life and death.

"CHANGING MY SEX LIFE ISN"T A CURE FOR AIDS."

That's true. There is no cure or vaccine. And researchers think they are years away from developing one. Safer sexual practices are our best means right now of reducing our risk and stopping the spread of AIDS.

"CHANGE? NOBODY ELSE IS DOING IT!"

The fact is that a major research project conducted by the AIDS Foundation among San Francisco Gaymen revealed that two-thirds of the Gay community is making a serious effort to reduce their risk by practicing safer sex. Two-thirds!

Talk about it. Even though its a difficult subject for everyone, chances are your partner is just as concerned as you are and would probably welcome a chance to discuss it.

Let's stop making excuses. Let's stop the spread of AIDS.

Reprinted from ACTS 29, Newsletter of [illegible]

Rectal gonorrhea has declined 86% since the AIDS scare -- people are aware of risks and are changing their sexual habits. Safe sex works.

Bulletin Board

HOOKER'S BALL - HALLOWEEN NIGHT -- Presented by all your favorite bars and the Order of Osiris. Prizes for costumes, all bars are involved, begins 7:00 p.m. Hallowe'en night, costumes are invited, and you are especially requested to attend this celebration of what is turning into the second most exciting activity of the year.

Birthdays

HAPPY BIRTHDAY - Queen Richard, Oct.9, from all the folks at Esquire House.

Label JARS Not PEOPLE

ANNIVERSARY

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY - Oct. 5 to Chuck at Troopers on their 2nd Year of fun and support of the community.

HAPPY BELATED ANNIVERSARY TO CPA - We were not notified in time for publication last month, but CPA celebrated their 2nd anniversary on Sept. 27th. Great going, guys!

476-9142

Gay

Help-line

We met at

DAVID'S II

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985

from the fellowship

"FREE TO BE"

12TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF MCC

Sacramento, California. The conference got off to an exciting start. Rev. Elders Freda Smith and Nancy Wilson both preached Monday. I especially enjoyed hearing them. The film, "God, Gays, and the Gospel" was also shown for the first time on Monday.

The film, a documentary telling about MCC and what it means, cost about $100,000 to make. Many unique aspects of MCC were brought out. The fact that MCC has membrers from every religious background and the highest proportion of women ministers were particularly interesting.

In the business meetings, a great deal was accomplished in the first few days. The Government Structures and Systems proposal was accepted with some minor amendments. Two changes will have the most immediate impact. One is the adoption of the General Council as the governing body of MCC. The General Council will be composed of the Board of Directors and the District Coordinators, thus giving total regional representation at the highest MCC level. The other change is that there will be only commissioned and chartered churches (instead of the three tier system as previously: Study group, mission, chartered church.). At the conference I was an official observer, with a voice, but without vote. In the future, all delegates will have a vote. Each delegate will represent one hundred members or a portion of 100 if the church is smaller. This means that even the smallest church will have a voting delegate.

All of che elders standing for re-election were elected.

I had an opportunity to sing in the Conference Choir, and attended several workshops, including the Sexuality and Spirituality and Spiritual Gifts workshop.

R.P., Delegate

Check it Out

MCC is the largest Gay/Lesbian organization in the world.

NOW (Nat'l Organization for Women) offers insurance for "significant others" (not just physicians, but alternative medicine as well).

Jerry Falwell and his "Moral Majority" are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars across the country to stop Gay/Lesbian rights.

A local printer refused to print our first newsletter because of its content.

A local bank refused to open a joint bank account for a well-known Gay couple.

The Unitarian-Universalist Association openly supports Gay/Lesbian rights.

Mobile Mental Health has actively trained and offers continued support for the Gay Helpline volunteers.

The Gay Helpline is in operation every night from 6 p.m. to midnight for anyone needing someone to talk to -- check it out.

The local bar owners and managers -- Chuck, Miss Betty, Jim, John, Grace and David -- make the printing and mailing of this newsletter possible.

The bar owners and managers donated money and supplies for the kick-off party to celebrate the opening of the Helpline, and that we will be raising funds for the Helpline from time to time, due to their generosity.

October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
UU WORSHIP 10:30 AM ev. every Sunday	NOVEMBER 1st ROCKY HORROR SHOW AT ESQUIRE WITH OSTRIS	1	2 RAP; Who's on Top-- Power in Relationships.	3		ER'S ANNIVERSARY
6 MCC WORSHIP 7:00 P.M. 5:30 New Memb.	7	8	9 RAP: Peer Pressure - Handling your friends.	10	11	12 COLUMBUS DAY
13 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 3:00Shrimp Boil at DAVID'sII VOLLEYBALL	14 COLUMBUS DAY OBSERVED	15	16 RAP Cross-Generational Relationships	17	18 UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS 2-DAY WORKSHOP	19 "The Haunting Church"
20 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 5:30 New Memb	21	22	23 RAP HOLDING HANDS Making a political statement.	24	25	26
27 MCC WORSHIP-7pm UU VOLLEYBALL 5:30 New Memb MOTHER-IN-LAW DAY	28	29	30 RAP HOMOPHOBIA -- THEIRS AND OURS	31 HOOKER'S BALL ALL THE BARS HALLOWEEN		

CLASSIFIED ADS

Weekend Sketch Group -- interested? Call the HELPLINE for information.

WRITERS GROUP -- Meet once a month for social contact and constructive criticism of members' work. Bring a piece of writing for criticism, and ke p a log of the number of hours spent wri ting. Contact Shirley L. at the HELPLINE.

BIKERS (no, silly, not that kind!) are being sought for a bike riding group. Ride, bring lunch and picnic-- weather will be perfect soon.

Halloween

FOR SALE: SCM Electric Typewriter, ribbon spool. Best offer. Evenings 8-10. 342-7891, ask for John.

PLUMBING - Indoors, reasonable rates. Expert service. Call evenings after 6, or Mondays, 476-5171, as for Harry.

CLEANING-INTERIOR PAINTING, WALLPAPER. Organize your precious collectibles?? Excellent references in both communities. 476-9142, ask for Shirley.

BOWLING LEAGUE -- Members of MCC want to form a bowling team to hopefully compete against other gay groups (bars, etc.). At least six teams are needed. Call the HELPLINE if you are interested.

SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.
433-9141

SUN. - THURS. 10 A. M. - 2 A.M.
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS

ESQUIRE
BAR & LOUNGE

- Phone 433-9175 -
Mon.-Fri. 9:30 a.m. Till
Sat. 9:30 a.m.-2a.m.
13 South Joachim St. Mobile, Ala.

The Metropolitan Community Church
AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD — MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA
Pastor — (205) 476-9142

Volume 1, No. 2 — October 1985

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART...

The veil of distaste and misconceptions surrounding the gay segment of the population is nowhere better illustrated than in the film, "God, Gays and the Gospel," a no-nonsense look at the rapid rise of the Metropolitan Community Church.

One of the most poignant plights of gay people in today's world is the denial of their right to worship by most of the traditional organized religions. Almost without exception the Christian faith has taken upon itself the right to refuse gays a part in the Family of God.

The long struggle by MCC founder Rev. Troy Perry to establish a faith, not just for gays but for anyone, is the focus of the film. In concise, to the point terms, the production addresses the sheer magnitude of the work being done and the forward strides being made by Perry and his legion of pastors and congregations.

Since its founding in 1969, MCC has endured everything from ridicule to bombings to burned-out church sanctuaries. More than 17 years later, Perry and his followers have forged a recognized, respected faith wherein all are welcomed. It is a tribute to the ecumenical and accepting nature of this church that 20 per cent of its members are non-gay. It is a true illustration of the overused, misused term, "real Christian people."

Perry, a transplanted Floridian, excluded from the church of his childhood, spent years berating himself as "unacceptable." In the end, he determined that there is no reason -- save for human bigotry and Biblical misinterpretation -- for gays to be denied a right to their faith. Nowhere in the Bible, he points out, is there condemnation of homosexuality as it is understood today. In one of his most moving sermons, he presents a stunning point: "If AIDS is God's "gift" to the homosexual, then is toxic shock syndrome God's "gift" to women for being female? ...or is Legionnaires' Disease God's "gift" to the American Legion for being too patriotic?

From the perspective of a "straight," the message of "God, Gays, and the Gospel" is very much to the point: No human deserves the right to tell another he or she will never be acceptable in the eyes of God. Moreover, it should be remembered that Perry et al are not working for immediate and total social acceptance, but for establishment of a climate of cooperation and understanding.

No "straight" who professes a concern for human rights should let gays bear this struggle alone.

(Note: N.J.Green is MCC at Mobile's "token straight," our assistant organist. Thank God for our "straight" friends.)

REMINDER

MCC MEMBERS-ATTENTION!
Congregational Meeting, October 27, following worship service. Election of officers, other important business, including coming into agreement with GSS changes.

FROM THE EDITOR--

Our first issue was a roaring success, so the community tells us. We personally wish to thank the bar owners and managers for making the newsletter a reality, rather than the "dream" so many of us have talked about for the last couple of years. At last we have a way to communicate ideas among gays in Mobile. We also want to apologize to Chuck at Troopers for omitting a news item last month. Thanks for bearing with us and our mistakes -- we'll get it right with practice. A word of thanks to all of you out there from the small group at MCC. Because of you the newsletter will continue to grow, to increase our awareness and to solidify the community.

To date we have received the names "Revelations," "Mobile Pride News," and "Genesis." Don't be bashful. Send or call in your suggestion.

We stated our purpose last month, "to offer a news source for the entire community." We are happy to report that this issue, our second, has accomplished that goal. Sincere applause to each organization and business for your participation. We are open to your suggestions and your criticism. Our new feature, "Community Profile" has already been designated for the November issue. Send in the name of someone you wish to acknowledge in a future issue.

Our editorial policy requires that a name and address be submitted along with newscopy. Your name and address will not be printed without your written consent, but we must have this information to protect the legal position of the church. Please drop editorial copy or editorial replies at the church or mail them to: MCC Newsletter, P.O. Box 8524, Mobile, Ala. 36608. The deadline for all copy is the Third Monday of the Month.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

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First Sunday of October begins David's free buffet from 3-9 p.m., and the Tea Dance.

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ESQUIRE - Rocky Horror Show November 1 and 2 at 9:30 p.m. Get your tickets from Esquire or any Osiris member. $5.00 per ticket.

PROFILE

Did you enjoy Mobile's Gay Pride 85? Our first profile is, Harry, organizer and leader of Pride 85. Harry was the catalyst that brought together the various elements of the community. It wasn't his first time out, certainly not his first effort for our benefit. Fifteen years in the Mobile area has seen Harry speaking at the University of South Alabama and Springhill College on Gay/Lesbian issues. He was one of the strong leaders of the old Gulf Alliance for Equality as well.

When Harry isn't working on our behalf, he enjoys meeting the public in his retail profession. While there's still daylight after a hard day at work, you might see him out bicycling or running, or on Sundays offering his talents at the Unitarian-Universalists' worship and fellowship. "My religion," Harry said, has given me a lot more direction in my life, and a greater sense of freedom to allow my own beliefs to evolve."

Harry offered the following thoughts about and reflections on Gay Pride'85: '85 was very successfull considering the late starting date for planning. '84, our first Gay Pride Activity, made '85 much easier to put together. Adding more organizations -- the UU's and MCC -- added much to '85's success. Without Danni B. '85 would not have come toether. A SPECIAL THANKS TO HER.

For 1986 Gay Pride, Harry foresees greatness. "For once, we are starting off with some money, $186.00, thanks to the bars. We will begin planning at a much earlier date, offering the same type of activities, with more variety, however. We will certainly push for more publicity and participation from all the organizations. We want Gay Pride to be financially self-supporting, and there's no reason it shouldn't be if we all work at it."

When asked what he would change if given the right opportunity, Harry offered the following: "I'd like to see more open Gay/Lesbian businesses, organizations, and individuals come out, and a greater media presence for the community. However, the fear of coming out is still our greatest obstacle. Most of us, including me, still face job discrimination, neighborhood harassment, and the possible loss of our families or their strong disapproval."

In a larger context, Harry went on, "Much of our recent publicity has been derogatory. I feel that the Moral Majority uses us as their biggest fundraiser, particularly now that AIDS has come to the forefront of the news media."

Harry is one of the strongest and most open figures in our Mobile Gay Community, and with his support and leadership, gay Mobile should reach the goals which he is helping us set.

SOCIETY LOUNGE - Beginning in October, the first weekend each month, Miss Betty will be presenting weekend shows at 10 and 12 midnight. No cover.

SOMETHING TO SELL, SERVICE TO OFFER?? Call 476-9142 for rates and deadlines. Please NO PERSONALS, except Birthday, Anniversary, Thank You's.

TROOPERS
215 Conti Street
438-9139
HOURS: 11 a.m.-3 a.m.

CORRAL
54 So. Conception
433-9258
Weekdays - Noon Till
Weekends - 24 hours

...from the pastor

SAUL AND ANOMIE

In the late 1800's, the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, coined the word ANOMIE (without a name) to explain the psychological state of strangers, people at the edge of social movements with enormous change, and people who belonged to subcultures where they were unsure of what the social expectations were within a dominant group. They felt, as James Baldwin must have, like "nobody knows my name." As a matter of fact, in a true state of anomie, it's more like "I don't even know my own name." Durkheim postulated that when a society is experiencing great anomie, the suicide rate goes up. When I read of Saul, the first king of Israel in the Bible, I realized that even in Biblical times, people knew the concept of anomie, even though they didn't know the word.

Saul lived in an anomic time. He was a soldier who had been trained in the old skills of warfare before iron was invented. Suddenly, there was iron. And iron was so strong that all the weapons he had been taught to use were nearly useless. So he learned to use iron, but he was never comfortable with it. Then the people of his area learned about a new God, and all the things he was used to in the old gods were outdated. To add to his problems, Jahweh decided Saul should be king of Israel. Saul wasn't from a royal family (there weren't any royal families in Israel -- he was the first) and he didn't know how a king behaved, he'd never even had a king. But Jahweh had selected him to be king. And still worse, his son gets friendly with this David fellow -- and he knows there's something strange there -- but can that fellow play the harp! He wasn't even permitted to ask the seer what was going to happen, and feel secure, he had to trust this Jahweh God. Saul learned to adapt -- but he was never happy with the new ways, and when things really got tough, he looked to his old gods and went over to see the Witch of Endor to find out what the enemy had in store. That was where he and Jahweh God parted. Poor Saul. He was caught in a world he hardly understood! Everything was changing, nothing seemed to have a center. How he wished for the good old days, when the gods were secure, the military knew what they were doing, the country had the right kind of folk leading it, and people knew how to behave-- knew the rules. Saul was so confused, he hardly knew his own name any more. He was a real case of anomie. And eventually, he did what Durkheim postulated -- he committed suicide.

Can you see some parallels? Many people today feel that sense of anomie. The world has changed so rapidly that people are frightened. They want some sense of the past to hold on to. God, they pray, make it safe again, let me know what to expect! Many Christians are at that point. The world has changed so greatly that they are frightened. Nuclear energy, great social upheaval -- especially within the time of the baby boomers; new forms of government--like Communism and socialism -- scare them. The questioning of old beliefs and the arising of new ideas --all of these together are frightening for people who remember how simple it was when everybody knew what to expect. When the milk train stopped and the old time religion had meaning for everyone -- when everyone was American and your neighbor wasn't a Cambodian Buddhist, a Russian Jew, a Japanese Taoist and your son or daughter hadn't picked up some new religion like the Moonies. When sexuality and sex roles were simple -- men were men and women were girls, and nobody they knew was gay. People out there are scared. And they want the old time religion that had meaning and they want to go back to the time when everybody knew the rules. Well, it's that kind of time, and Jerry Falwell plays upon the fears of those people, and promises them "The Old Time Gospel Hour" and tells them who the enemy is (us), and they follow him, and he profits, and profits, and profits.

But maybe there's more to it than that. Durkheim was also talking about anomie being a condition for strangers and sojourners and for people in subcultures. Maybe there's something there for us, as well. Gay liberation has called us to come out -- it has asked us to change our ways and to trust God to help us find a way to be a new kind of gay people-- strong, and open, and fearless. And

WELCOME

SOOM AND DIGNITY TO BEGIN IN MOBILE

Efforts are being made to organize two new organizations for gay and Lesbian people in Mobile. According to John P., who is spearheading the drive, the Silver Owls of Mobile (SOOM) and a Dignity chapter are looking for persons interested in these groups.

SOOM is a social group for older people, usually over the age of 40, and for younger people who like to be with older gays and Lesbians.

Dignity is an organization for gay Catholics and their friends. The chapter will be part of the national organization that consists of over 117 chapters across the nation.

"Too often gay and Lesbian Catholics feel alienated from their church. Dignity has been successful in being a bridge for these people to rebuild a religious life. Also, Dignity has been effective in creating a dialogue with the church's hierarchy," said John P.

He noted that the SOOM organization is simply an attempt to bring people together in a social context. "Many older gays and Lesbians simply have no social place to go except the bars, where they are usually ignored by younger people. SOOM will be an attempt to provide a congenial group for dinner parties, theater and other outings.

Anyone interested in SOOM or Dignity is asked to contact John at 342-7891, or the HELPLINE at 476-9142.

FIRST NIGHTERS

People interested in going to theater: Involves joining Joe Jefferson Players ($25.00 for 6 plays/musicals) plus other theater presentations. Call HELPLINE for further information - 476-9142.

...from the pastor

maybe we, too, are like the Falwell followers. It was so secure in my closet. I was so comfortable hiding. I really don't need these new, frightening ideas of openness and liberation, do I? Oh, yes, you do. You need them for your mental health, you need them for your ability to be a whole person, you need them in a world of change, so that you can change with the world and not be stuck, as Saul was, in fear. Saul clung to the old gods, and could not trust Jahweh God -- and he lost. Most of us try the same thing. We stick to our old gods, our closetedness and our lies. God sees through us -- God knows who we are, and God loves us enough to invite us to be KING. Be all you can be, be the royal person God invites you to be. The alternative for far too many of us has been Saul's solution, suicide; the death of who we really are or can be. The gay community is growing up, and learning that in taking risks there is strength and growth. Don't be a Saul -- be a David. Take the risks -- and grow!

COMING OUT

I've often heard Rev. Marge quote her friend from Providence, Ray LaRiviere, who coined a phrase about gay attitudes, "As long as I can boogie, I'm free." A lot of us started out the same way. If it hadn't been for Gay/Lesbian bars, we would have had nothing. Work, a relationship, maybe -- and then party time at the bars. But heavens, don't ask me to meet your there before the sun went down.

We remain in our closets, doing nothing, hoping and sometimes even praying that no one ever discovers who we "really are." From birth, almost, we are conditioned that to be Gay/Lesbian is a fate worse than death. So we hide and we die a thousand deaths each day. And then one day something wakes us up and we come face to face with years of playing "straight" games. The roles we adopted are unbelievable and staggering, not to mention the toll oppression has taken on our lives.

Sane or insane? The medical world finally realized our sexual preferences had nothing to do with our sanity. Yet, many of our people have difficulty making it through life. Many suffer dependency problems -- sexual, drug, alcohol -- many are emotionally crippled by "oppression sickness." They really don't remain sane in world that tries to crush them.

To many of you out there, "coming out" would be insane. For many it would be. The greatest day of my life, however, was when I became insane. Oh, I'd already come out to some very selected "straight" friends, having carefully tested the waters before ever diving. Heck, they already knew who I was anyway.

Things started changing the day I walked into the new MCC. Sweat poured down my back, fear gripped every part of my body. I made myself sit in the second pew from the front, another bold move for me. I looked behind me, and came face to face with an older "straight couple." I muttered some weird excuse (to whom I still don't know) and got up to leave. But I didn't.

I made it through the daylight. I made it through the service in God's house. I was introduced to the older couple and lived. Last week at Bruno's I happened to notice my attire and chuckled to myself. My MCC teeshirt looked quite nice! A couple of people gave me knowing smiles, but most of the shoppers paid no attention to me. Most of them, if they knew what an MCC was wouldn't have cared anyway. Most of your professional associates, your families, your straight friends probably know who you are right now. Some may not want the confrontation of being told, but many would welcome your openness and applaud your courage and honesty.

For years, a small minority ran my life. Now I'm in charge. IT FEELS GOOD!!!

THERE IS NO LONGER AN EXCUSE FOR SPREADING AIDS

Right now in the gay community, we're faced with some extremely difficult decisions because of AIDS -- sexual decisions affecting our lives and life-styles. We Gaymen have come up with a lot of excuses for avoiding the issue.

We all know that safer sex can reduce the risk of contracting and spreading AIDS. Some practices are more effective than others; some we have questions about.

We all need to make informed decisions, not excuses. You'll probably agree that none of the following excuses justify the pread of AIDS in our community:

"WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And it's the community's. Everyone must take a concerned and active role if we're going to stop the spread of this disease.

Here's another common excuse: "If someone doesn't ask me to practice safer sex, I figure that's his decision and I respect it."

Why? Aren't you concerned? Perhaps your partner is just as uncomfortable in raising the issue as you are.

"WHOSE LIFE IS IT, ANYWAY?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And the community's. The excuse, "It's my life," is only partly true. The life of your partner and the well-being of the community are also at stake.

AIDS is not just a physical problem. There are political, social, and economic effects as well. There is already evidence that social freedoms may be restricted because of AIDS. AIDS can be used as an excuse for anti-Gay action and legislation.

Making decisions about sexual practices is difficult. Sticking to those decisions is even more difficult. But this isn't a moral issue; it's a matter of life and death.

"CHANGING MY SEX LIFE ISN"T A CURE FOR AIDS."

That's true. There is no cure or vaccine. And researchers think they are years away from developing one. Safer sexual practices are our best means right now of reducing our risk and stopping the spread of AIDS.

"CHANGE? NOBODY ELSE IS DOING IT!"

The fact is that a major research project conducted by the AIDS Foundation among San Francisco Gaymen revealed that two-thirds of the Gay community is making a serious effort to reduce their risk by practicing safer sex. Two-thirds!

Talk about it. Even though its a difficult subject for everyone, chances are your partner is just as concerned as you are and would probably welcome a chance to discuss it.

Let's stop making excuses. Let's stop the spread of AIDS.

Reprinted from ACTS 29, Newsletter of [illegible]

Rectal gonorrhea has declined 86% since the AIDS scare -- people are aware of risks and are changing their sexual habits. Safe sex works.

Bulletin Board

HOOKER'S BALL - HALLOWEEN NIGHT -- Presented by all your favorite bars and the Order of Osiris. Prizes for costumes, all bars are involved, begins 7:00 p.m. Hallowe'en night, costumes are invited, and you are especially requested to attend this celebration of what is turning into the second most exciting activity of the year.

Birthdays

HAPPY BIRTHDAY - Queen Richard, Oct.9, from all the folks at Esquire House.

Label JARS Not PEOPLE

ANNIVERSARY

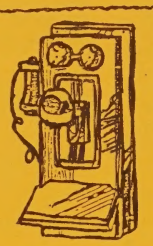
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY - Oct. 5 to Chuck at Troopers on their 2nd Year of fun and support of the community.

HAPPY BELATED ANNIVERSARY TO CPA - We were not notified in time for publication last month, but CPA celebrated their 2nd anniversary on Sept. 27th. Great going, guys!

476-9142

Gay

Help-line



We met at

DAVID'S II

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, Al • 473-5985

from the fellowship

"FREE TO BE"

12TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF MCC

Sacramento, California. The conference got off to an exciting start. Rev. Elders Freda Smith and Nancy Wilson both preached Monday. I especially enjoyed hearing them. The film, "God, Gays, and the Gospel" was also shown for the first time on Monday.

The film, a documentary telling about MCC and what it means, cost about $100,000 to make. Many unique aspects of MCC were brought out. The fact that MCC has membrers from every religious background and the highest proportion of women ministers were particularly interesting.

In the business meetings, a great deal was accomplished in the first few days. The Government Structures and Systems proposal was accepted with some minor amendments. Two changes will have the most immediate impact. One is the adoption of the General Council as the governing body of MCC. The General Council will be composed of the Board of Directors and the District Coordinators, thus giving total regional representation at the highest MCC level. The other change is that there will be only commissioned and chartered churches (instead of the three tier system as previously: Study group, mission, chartered church.). At the conference I was an official observer, with a voice, but without vote. In the future, all delegates will have a vote. Each delegate will represent one hundred members or a portion of 100 if the church is smaller. This means that even the smallest church will have a voting delegate.

All of the elders standing for re-election were elected.

I had an opportunity to sing in the Conference Choir, and attended several workshops, including the Sexuality and Spirituality and Spiritual Gifts workshop.

R.P., Delegate

Check it Out

MCC is the largest Gay/Lesbian organization in the world.

NOW (Nat'l Organization for Women) offers insurance for "significant others" (not just physicians, but alternative medicine as well).

Jerry Falwell and his "Moral Majority" are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars across the country to stop Gay/Lesbian rights.

A local printer refused to print our first newsletter because of its content.

A local bank refused to open a joint bank account for a well-known Gay couple.

The Unitarian-Universalist Association openly supports Gay/Lesbian rights.

Mobile Mental Health has actively trained and offers continued support for the Gay Helpline volunteers.

The Gay Helpline is in operation every night from 6 p.m. to midnight for anyone needing someone to talk to -- check it out.

The local bar owners and managers -- Chuck, Miss Betty, Jim, John, Grace and David -- make the printing and mailing of this newsletter possible.

The bar owners and managers donated money and supplies for the kick-off party to celebrate the opening of the Helpline, and that we will be raising funds for the Helpline from time to time, due to their generosity.

October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
UU WORSHIP 10:30 AM ev. every Sunday	NOVEMBER 1st ROCKY HORROR SHOW AT ESQUIRE WITH OSIRIS	1	2 RAP; Who's on Top-- Power in Relationships.	3		ER'S ANNIVERSARY
6 MCC WORSHIP 7:00 P.M. 5:30 New Memb	7	8	9 RAP: Peer Pressure - Handling your friends.	10	11	12 COLUMBUS DAY
13 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 3:00Shrimp Boil at DAVID'sII UU VOLLEYBALL	14 COLUMBUS DAY OBSERVED	15	16 RAP Cross-Generational Relationships	17	18 UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS 2-DAY WORKSHOP	19 "The Haunting Church"
20 MCC WORSHIP-7pm 5:30 New Memb	21	22	23 RAP HOLDING HANDS Making a political statement.	24	25	26
27 MCC WORSHIP-7pm UU VOLLEYBALL 5:30 New Memb MOTHER-IN-LAW DAY	28	29	30 RAP HOMOPHOBIA -- THEIRS AND OURS	31 HOOKER'S BALL ALL THE BARS HALLOWEEN		

CLASSIFIED ADS

Weekend Sketch Group -- interested? Call the HELPLINE for information.

WRITERS GROUP -- Meet once a month for social contact and constructive criticism of members' work. Bring a piece of writing for criticism, and ke p a log of the number of hours spent wri ting. Contact Shirley L. at the HELPLINE.

BIKERS (no, silly, not that kind!) are being sought for a bike riding group. Ride, bring lunch and picnic-- weather will be perfect soon.

Halloween

FOR SALE: SCM Electric Typewriter, ribbon spool. Best offer. Evenings 8-10. 342-7891, ask for John.

PLUMBING - Indoors, reasonable rates. Expert service. Call evenings after 6, or Mondays, 476-5171, as for Harry.

CLEANING-INTERIOR PAINTING, WALLPAPER. Organize your precious collectibles?? Excellent references in both communities. 476-9142, ask for Shirley.

BOWLING LEAGUE -- Members of MCC want to form a bowling team to hopefully compete against other gay groups (bars, etc.). At least six teams are needed. Call the HELPLINE if you are interested.

SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.
433-9141

SUN. - THURS. 10 A. M. - 2 A.M.
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS

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Mon.-Fri. 9:30 a.m. Till
Sat. 9:30 a.m.-2a.m.
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The Metropolitan Community Church
AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD — MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA, Pastor — (205) 476-9142

Volume 1, No. 2 — October 1985

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART...

The veil of distaste and misconceptions surrounding the gay segment of the population is nowhere better illustrated than in the film, "God, Gays and the Gospel," a no-nonsense look at the rapid rise of the Metropolitan Community Church.

One of the most poignant plights of gay people in today's world is the denial of their right to worship by most of the traditional organized religions. Almost without exception the Christian faith has taken upon itself the right to refuse gays a part in the Family of God.

The long struggle by MCC founder Rev. Troy Perry to establish a faith, not just for gays but for anyone, is the focus of the film. In concise, to the point terms, the production addresses the sheer magnitude of the work being done and the forward strides being made by Perry and his legion of pastors and congregations.

Since its founding in 1969, MCC has endured everything from ridicule to bombings to burned-out church sanctuaries. More than 17 years later, Perry and his followers have forged a recognized, respected faith wherein all are welcomed. It is a tribute to the ecumenical and accepting nature of this church that 20 per cent of its members are non-gay. It is a true illustration of the overused, misused term, "real Christian people."

Perry, a transplanted Floridian, excluded from the church of his childhood, spent years berating himself as "unacceptable." In the end, he determined that there is no reason -- save for human bigotry and Biblical misinterpretation -- for gays to be denied a right to their faith. Nowhere in the Bible, he points out, is there condemnation of homosexuality as it is understood today. In one of his most moving sermons, he presents a stunning point: "If AIDS is God's "gift" to the homosexual, then is toxic shock syndrome God's "gift" to women for being female? ...or is Legionnaires' Disease God's "gift" to the American Legion for being too patriotic?

From the perspective of a "straïght," the message of "God, Gays, and the Gospel" is very much to the point: No human deserves the right to tell another he or she will never be acceptable in the eyes of God. Moreover, it should be remembered that Perry et al are not working for immediate and total social acceptance, but for establishment of a climate of cooperation and understanding.

No "straight" who professes a concern for human rights should let gays bear this struggle alone.

(Note: N.J.Green is MCC at Mobile's "token straight," our assistant organist. Thank God for our "straight" friends.)

REMINDER

MCC MEMBERS-ATTENTION!

Congregational Meeting, October 27, following worship service. Election of officers, other important business, including coming into agreement with GSS changes.

FROM THE EDITOR--

Our first issue was a roaring success, so the community tells us. We personally wish to thank the bar owners and managers for making the newsletter a reality, rather than the "dream" so many of us have talked about for the last couple of years. At last we have a way to communicate ideas among gays in Mobile. We also want to apologize to Chuck at Troopers for omitting a news item last month. Thanks for bearing with us and our mistakes -- we'll get it right with practice. A word of thanks to all of you out there from the small group at MCC. Because of you the newsletter will continue to grow, to increase our awareness and to solidify the community.

To date we have received the names "Revelations," "Mobile Pride News," and "Genesis." Don't be bashful. Send or call in your suggestion.

We stated our purpose last month, "to offer a news source for the entire community." We are happy to report that this issue, our second, has accomplished that goal. Sincere applause to each organization and business for your participation. We are open to your suggestions and your criticism. Our new feature, "Community Profile" has already been designated for the November issue. Send in the name of someone you wish to acknowledge in a future issue.

Our editorial policy requires that a name and address be submitted along with newscopy. Your name and address will not be printed without your written consent, but we must have this information to protect the legal position of the church. Please drop editorial copy or editorial replies at the church or mail them to: MCC Newsletter, P.O. Box 8524, Mobile, Ala. 36608. The deadline for all copy is the Third Monday of the Month.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

NEWS FROM THE LESBIAN TASK FORCE OF NOW

Two important pieces of legislation are going to be brought to Congress in this year, NOW has informed us. One, is H.R. 230, the Federal Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights Legislation which is spearheaded by Representative Ted Weiss of Brooklyn, N.Y. and carries the endorsement of 44 other representatives, including Rep. Gerry Studds of Massachusetts, an openly gay legislator. The bill primarily calls for the insertion of the words, "affexional or sexual orientation," throughout the Civil Rights Act of 1964, following the word "color," and in other legislation, like the Equal opportunity Act, where it is inserted after "sex." thus identifying gay and Lesbian discrimination as equal to that against people of color and as pervasive as sexism. Interestingly, the same act speaks against acts of intimidation or violence against gays and Lesbians in the same passage that it speaks about violence against religious groups.

The other piece of legislation is the now infamous McCarran-Walter act, which prohibits certain people from entering the United States because of political or sexual orientation. Farley Mowat, the Canadian author of such dangerous books as the environmental study, "Never Cry Wolf," and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Colombia's Nobel Prize Winning novelist, were both excluded -- and refused to be singled out as special cases -- under this Act. Gay men and women can be refused entry into the U.S. -- and have been -- by the terms of the McCarran Act. It is important for the McCarran Act to not include gays and Lesbians under the heading of those accused of "moral turpitude."

The legislation above is entitled Immigration Exclusion and Deportation Amendments of 1985. The first is HR 230. Your congressional representative will vote on both of these. Make your wishes known. One letter -- one letter -- can make the difference, because very few letters on any subject are received from constituents, and as many as five or six letters can seem like an avalanche. If you are interested in how to write to Congress, call the HELPLINE for a copy of MCC's booklet, Writing to Congress, from MCC's Department of Christian Social Action.

Bulletin Board

ORDER OF OSIRIS - "The Rocky Horror Show" Friday and Saturday, November 1 and 2, Presented by the Order of Osiris and the Esquire House -- at the Esquire House. $5.00 admission. See an Osiris member or your bartender for tickets.

Less than 140 days to Osiris' 5th Anniversary Mardi Gras Ball, February 7, 1986.

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - Study series for 4 weeks on Men's Life and Men's Issues. Call the UU's at 342-6834 for information and starting date (near the end of the month.)

2-day Workshop -- The Haunting Church October 18 and 19 at the UU Fellowship 6345 Old Shell Road.

Volleyball -- every 2nd and 4th Sunday, at 2 P.M. at the UU's, weather permitting.

better gay than grumpy

TROOPERS - Shuffleboard tournaments every Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. Pool tournaments every Thursday at 8:30. Some of the best popcorn in Mobile.

CORRAL - Pool tournament every Monday at 9:00 p.m. Please watch for announcements of upcoming Halloween events.

CPA - Costume contest at midnight in conjunction with Hooker's Ball.

Free buffet every Sunday at 9:30 p.m.

Watch for "Name that Tune" to begin early NOvember on Sunday evenings.

DAVID'S II - Special Guest, Halloween Eve through Saturday, Carmen Del Rio.

First Sunday of October begins David's free buffet from 3-9 p.m., and the Tea Dance.

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Weekdays - Noon Till
Weekends - 24 hours

THERE IS NO LONGER AN EXCUSE FOR SPREADING AIDS

Right now in the gay community, we're faced with some extremely difficult decisions because of AIDS -- sexual decisions affecting our lives and life-styles. We Gaymen have come up with a lot of excuses for avoiding the issue.

We all know that safer sex can reduce the risk of contracting and spreading AIDS. Some practices are more effective than others; some we have questions about.

We all need to make informed decisions, not excuses. You'll probably agree that none of the following excuses justify the pread of AIDS in our community:

"WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And it's the community's. Everyone must take a concerned and active role if we're going to stop the spread of this disease.

Here's another common excuse: "If someone doesn't ask me to practice safer sex, I figure that's his decision and I respect it."

Why? Aren't you concerned? Perhaps your partner is just as uncomfortable in raising the issue as you are.

"WHOSE LIFE IS IT, ANYWAY?"

It's yours. Your partner's. And the community's. The excuse, "It's my life," is only partly true. The life of your partner and the well-being of the community are also at stake.

AIDS is not just a physical problem. There are political, social, and economic effects as well. There is already evidence that social freedoms may be restricted because of AIDS. AIDS can be used as an excuse for anti-Gay action and legislation.

Making decisions about sexual practices is difficult. Sticking to those decisions is even more difficult. But this isn't a moral issue; it's a matter of life and death.

"CHANGING MY SEX LIFE ISN"T A CURE FOR AIDS."

That's true. There is no cure or vaccine. And researchers think they are years away from developing one. Safer sexual practices are our best means right now of reducing our risk and stopping the spread of AIDS.

"CHANGE? NOBODY ELSE IS DOING IT!"

The fact is that a major research project conducted by the AIDS Foundation among San Francisco Gaymen revealed that two-thirds of the Gay community is making a serious effort to reduce their risk by practicing safer sex. Two-thirds!

Talk about it. Even though its a difficult subject for everyone, chances are your partner is just as concerned as you are and would probably welcome a chance to discuss it.

Let's stop making excuses. Let's stop the spread of AIDS.

Reprinted from ACTS 29, Newsletter of
St. Luke's MCC, Jacksonville, Florida

Rectal gonorrhea has declined 86% since the AIDS scare -- people are aware of risks and are changing their sexual habits. Safe sex works.

Bulletin Board

HOOKER'S BALL - HALLOWEEN NIGHT -- Presented by all your favorite bars and the Order of Osiris. Prizes for costumes, all bars are involved, begins 7:00 p.m. Hallowe'en night, costumes are invited, and you are especially requested to attend this celebration of what is turning into the second most exciting activity of the year.

Birthdays

HAPPY BIRTHDAY - Queen Richard, Oct.9, from all the folks at Esquire House.

Label JARS Not PEOPLE

ANNIVERSARY

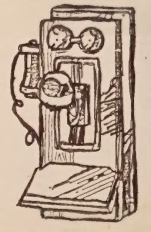
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY - Oct. 5 to Chuck at Troopers on their 2nd Year of fun and support of the community.

HAPPY BELATED ANNIVERSARY TO CPA - We were not notified in time for publication last month, but CPA celebrated their 2nd anniversary on Sept. 27th. Great going, guys!

476-9142

Gay

Help-line



We met at

DAVID'S II

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985

from the fellowship

"FREE TO BE"

12TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF MCC

Sacramento, California. The conference got off to an exciting start. Rev. Elders Freda Smith and Nancy Wilson both preached Monday. I especially enjoyed hearing them. The film, "God, Gays, and the Gospel" was also shown for the first time on Monday.

The film, a documentary telling about MCC and what it means, cost about $100,000 to make. Many unique aspects of MCC were brought out. The fact that MCC has membrers from every religious background and the highest proportion of women ministers were particularly interesting.

In the business meetings, a great deal was accomplished in the first few days. The Government Structures and Systems proposal was accepted with some minor amendments. Two changes will have the most immediate impact. One is the adoption of the General Council as the governing body of MCC. The General Council will be composed of the Board of Directors and the District Coordinators, thus giving total regional representation at the highest MCC level. The other change is that there will be only commissioned and chartered churches (instead of the three tier system as previously: Study group, mission, chartered church.). At the conference I was an official observer, with a voice, but without vote. In the future, all delegates will have a vote. Each delegate will represent one hundred members or a portion of 100 if the church is smaller. This means that even the smallest church will have a voting delegate.

All of the elders standing for re-election were elected.

I had an opportunity to sing in the Conference Choir, and attended several workshops, including the Sexuality and Spirituality and Spiritual Gifts workshop.

R.P., Delegate

Check it Out

MCC is the largest Gay/Lesbian organization in the world.

NOW (Nat'l Organization for Women) offers insurance for "significant others" (not just physicians, but alternative medicine as well).

Jerry Falwell and his "Moral Majority" are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars across the country to stop Gay/Lesbian rights.

A local printer refused to print our first newsletter because of its content.

A local bank refused to open a joint bank account for a well-known Gay couple.

The Unitarian-Universalist Association openly supports Gay/Lesbian rights.

Mobile Mental Health has actively trained and offers continued support for the Gay Helpline volunteers.

The Gay Helpline is in operation every night from 6 p.m. to midnight for anyone needing someone to talk to -- check it out.

The local bar owners and managers -- Chuck, Miss Betty, Jim, John, Grace and David -- make the printing and mailing of this newsletter possible.

The bar owners and managers donated money and supplies for the kick-off party to celebrate the opening of the Helpline, and that we will be raising funds for the Helpline from time to time, due to their generosity.

...from the pastor

SAUL AND ANOMIE

In the late 1800's, the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, coined the word ANOMIE (without a name) to explain the psychological state of strangers, people at the edge of social movements with enormous change, and people who belonged to subcultures where they were unsure of what the social expectations were within a dominant group. They felt, as James Baldwin must have, like "nobody knows my name." As a matter of fact, in a true state of anomie, it's more like "I don't even know my own name." Durkheim postulated that when a society is experiencing great anomie, the suicide rate goes up. When I read of Saul, the first king of Israel in the Bible, I realized that even in Biblical times, people knew the concept of anomie, even though they didn't know the word.

Saul lived in an anomic time. He was a soldier who had been trained in the old skills of warfare before iron was invented. Suddenly, there was iron. And iron was so strong that all the weapons he had been taught to use were nearly useless. So he learned to use iron, but he was never comfortable with it. Then the people of his area learned about a new God, and all the things he was used to in the old gods were outdated. To add to his problems, Jahweh decided Saul should be king of Israel. Saul wasn't from a royal family (there weren't any royal families in Israel -- he was the first) and he didn't know how a king behaved, he'd never even had a king. But Jahweh had selected him to be king. And still worse, his son gets friendly with this David fellow -- and he knows there's something strange there -- but can that fellow play the harp! He wasn't even permitted to ask the seer what was going to happen, and feel secure, he had to trust this Jahweh God. Saul learned to adapt -- but he was never happy with the new ways, and when things really got tough, he looked to his old gods and went over to see the Witch of Endor to find out what the enemy had in store. That was where he and Jahweh God parted. Poor Saul. He was caught in a world he hardly understood! Everything was changing, nothing seemed to have a center. How he wished for the good old days, when the gods were secure, the military knew what they were doing, the country had the right kind of folk leading it, and people knew how to behave-- knew the rules. Saul was so confused, he hardly knew his own name any more. He was a real case of anomie. And eventually, he did what Durkheim postulated -- he committed suicide.

Can you see some parallels? Many people today feel that sense of anomie. The world has changed so rapidly that people are frightened. They want some sense of the past to hold on to. God, they pray, make it safe again, let me know what to expect! Many Christians are at that point. The world has changed so greatly that they are frightened. Nuclear energy, great social upheaval -- especially within the time of the baby boomers; new forms of government--like Communism and socialism -- scare them. The questioning of old beliefs and the arising of new ideas --all of these together are frightening for people who remember how simple it was when everybody knew what to expect. When the milk train stopped and the old time religion had meaning for everyone -- when everyone was American and your neighbor wasn't a Cambodian Buddhist, a Russian Jew, a Japanese Taoist and your son or daughter hadn't picked up some new religion like the Moonies. When sexuality and sex roles were simple -- men were men and women were girls, and nobody they knew was gay. People out there are scared. And they want the old time religion that had meaning and they want to go back to the time when everybody knew the rules. Well, it's that kind of time, and Jerry Falwell plays upon the fears of those people, and promises them "The Old Time Gospel Hour" and tells them who the enemy is (us), and they follow him, and he profits, and profits, and profits.

But maybe there's more to it than that. Durkheim was also talking about anomie being a condition for strangers and sojourners and for people in subcultures. Maybe there's something there for us, as well. Gay liberation has called us to come out -- it has asked us to change our ways and to trust God to help us find a way to be a new kind of gay people-- strong, and open, and fearless. And

WELCOME

SOOM AND DIGNITY TO BEGIN IN MOBILE

Efforts are being made to organize two new organizations for gay and Lesbian people in Mobile. According to John P., who is spearheading the drive, the Silver Owls of Mobile (SOOM) and a Dignity chapter are looking for persons interested in these groups.

SOOM is a social group for older people, usually over the age of 40, and for younger people who like to be with older gays and Lesbians.

Dignity is an organization for gay Catholics and their friends. The chapter will be part of the national organization that consists of over 117 chapters across the nation.

"Too often gay and Lesbian Catholics feel alienated from their church. Dignity has been successful in being a bridge for these people to rebuild a religious life. Also, Dignity has been effective in creating a dialogue with the church's hierarchy," said John P.

He noted that the SOOM organization is simply an attempt to bring people together in a social context. "Many older gays and Lesbians simply have no social place to go except the bars, where they are usually ignored by younger people. SOOM will be an attempt to provide a congenial group for dinner parties, theater and other outings.

Anyone interested in SOOM or Dignity is asked to contact John at 342-7891, or the HELPLINE at 476-9142.

FIRST NIGHTERS

People interested in going to theater: Involves joining Joe Jefferson Players ($25.00 for 6 plays/musicals) plus other theater presentations. Call HELPLINE for further information - 476-9142.

...from the pastor

maybe we, too, are like the Falwell followers. It was so secure in my closet. I was so comfortable hiding. I really don't need these new, frightening ideas of openness and liberation, do I? Oh, yes, you do. You need them for your mental health, you need them for your ability to be a whole person, you need them in a world of change, so that you can change with the world and not be stuck, as Saul was, in fear. Saul clung to the old gods, and could not trust Jahweh God -- and he lost. Most of us try the same thing. We stick to our old gods, our closetedness and our lies. God sees through us -- God knows who we are, and God loves us enough to invite us to be KING. Be all you can be, be the royal person God invites you to be. The alternative for far too many of us has been Saul's solution, suicide; the death of who we really are or can be. The gay community is growing up, and learning that in taking risks there is strength and growth. Don't be a Saul -- be a David. Take the risks -- and grow!

COMING OUT

I've often heard Rev. Marge quote her friend from Providence, Ray LaRiviere, who coined a phrase about gay attitudes, "As long as I can boogie, I'm free." A lot of us started out the same way. If it hadn't been for Gay/Lesbian bars, we would have had nothing. Work, a relationship, maybe -- and then party time at the bars. But heavens, don't ask me to meet your there before the sun went down.

We remain in our closets, doing nothing, hoping and sometimes even praying that no one ever discovers who we "really are." From birth, almost, we are conditioned that to be Gay/Lesbian is a fate worse than death. So we hide and we die a thousand deaths each day. And then one day something wakes us up and we come face to face with years of playing "straight" games. The roles we adopted are unbelievable and staggering, not to mention the toll oppression has taken on our lives.

Sane or insane? The medical world finally realized our sexual preferences had nothing to do with our sanity. Yet, many of our people have difficulty making it through life. Many suffer dependency problems -- sexual, drug, alcohol -- many are emotionally crippled by "oppression sickness." They really don't remain sane in world that tries to crush them.

To many of you out there, "coming out" would be insane. For many it would be. The greatest day of my life, however, was when I became insane. Oh, I'd already come out to some very selected "straight" friends, having carefully tested the waters before ever diving. Heck, they already knew who I was anyway.

Things started changing the day I walked into the new MCC. Sweat poured down my back, fear gripped every part of my body. I made myself sit in the second pew from the front, another bold move for me. I looked behind me, and came face to face with an older "straight couple." I muttered some weird excuse (to whom I still don't know) and got up to leave. But I didn't.

I made it through the daylight. I made it through the service in God's house. I was introduced to the older couple and lived. Last week at Bruno's I happened to notice my attire and chuckled to myself. My MCC teeshirt looked quite nice! A couple of people gave me knowing smiles, but most of the shoppers paid no attention to me. Most of them, if they knew what an MCC was wouldn't have cared anyway. Most of your professional associates, your families, your straight friends probably know who you are right now. Some may not want the confrontation of being told, but many would welcome your openness and applaud your courage and honesty.

For years, a small minority ran my life. Now I'm in charge. IT FEELS GOOD!!!

October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
UU WORSHIP 10 AM ev... every Sunday	NOVEMBER 1&2 ROCKY HORROR SHOW AT CAMELOT WITH OUTAIS		2 RAP: W...'s on Ton... Power in Rela... tionships.	3		4 HOOKER'S ANNIVERSARY
6 ... 5:30 New Memb	7	8	9 RAP: Peer Pressure - Handling your friends.	10	11	12 COL... DAY
13 MCC WOR-SHIP-7pm 3:00 Shrimp Boil at DAVID'S!!! UU VOLLEYBALL	14 COLUMBUS DAY OBSERVED	15	16 RAP Cross-Generational Relationships	17	18 UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST 2-DAY WORKSHOP	19 "The Haunting Church"
20 MCC WOR-SHIP-7pm 5:30 New Memb	21	22	23 RAP HOLDING HANDS Making a political statement.	24	25	26
27 MCC WOR-SHIP-7pm UU VOLLEYBALL 5:30 New Memb MOTHER-IN-LAW DAY	28	29	30 RAP HOMOPHOBIA -- THEIRS AND OURS	31 HOOKER'S BALL ALL THE BARS HALLOWEEN	SEPTEMBER S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	NOVEMBER S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

CLASSIFIED ADS

Weekend Sketch Group -- interested? Call the HELPLINE for information.

WRITERS GROUP -- Meet once a month for social contact and constructive criticism of members' work. Bring a piece of writing for criticism, and ke p a log of the number of hours spent wri ting. Contact Shirley L. at the HELPLINE.

BIKERS (no, silly, not that kind!) are being sought for a bike riding group. Ride, bring lunch and picnic-- weather will be perfect soon.

Halloween

FOR SALE: SCM Electric Typewriter, ribbon spool. Best offer. Evenings 8-10. 342-7891, ask for John.

PLUMBING - Indoors, reasonable rates. Expert service. Call evenings after 6, or Mondays, 476-5171, as for Harry.

CLEANING-INTERIOR PAINTING, WALLPAPER. Organize your precious collectibles?? Excellent references in both communities. 476-9142, ask for Shirley.

BOWLING LEAGUE -- Members of MCC want to form a bowling team to hopefully compete against other gay groups (bars, etc.). At least six teams are needed. Call the HELPLINE if you are interested.

SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.
433-9141

SUN. - THURS. 10 A. M. - 2 A.M.
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS

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- Phone 433-9175 -
Mon.-Fri. 9:30 a.m. Till
Sat. 9:30 a.m.-2a.m.
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